

THE SEVEN BODIES OF MAN IN HERMETIC ASTROLOGY

by Denis Labouré

(translated from the French by Michael Edwards)

The Advent Of Astrology

Stars and planets, being the visible image of the gods, were consulted from remotest antiquity. Between the 18th and 15th centuries BCE priority was accorded to unusual phenomena, such as eclipses or the appearance of comets and shooting stars. In the beginning the diviners' judgements were concerned with the fate of the country.

Celestial omens were not applied to *individuals* until the very end of Babylonian civilisation, around the 5th, 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, when planetary positions at the moment of birth began to receive consideration in predicting events destined to occur during the course of existence (the earliest nativity so far discovered appears on a cuneiform tablet dating from 410 BCE).

In Alexandria, in Hellenised Egypt, astronomers, Neo-Platonic philosophers and Hermeticists systematised and developed this hitherto fragmentary *genethliacal* astrology (from Greek *genethle*: birth). To the original Babylonian astrology, preoccupied with the planets' movements and positions in the zodiacal constellations, they added further doctrines, such as our so-called *houses* and *aspects*. Thus was born Greek astrology, which embarked on its triumphal march across the world, spreading from the Roman Empire as far as the Indian subcontinent.

But what was the source of genethliacal astrology's power of attraction? Why was it accepted throughout the entire known world, to the point of eclipsing in the minds of our contemporaries the ancient forms of Urania's art?

Chaldean Theology

The basic doctrine of genethliacal astrology rests for the most part on an astral theology attributed to the Babylonians (though in fact largely developed by the Graeco-Romans), transmitted to Rome by Julian the Chaldean¹ and his son, Julian the Theurgist, during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE). Both were authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*, teachings adopted by the Neo-Platonic philosophers, notably Porphyry and Iamblichus (3rd and 4th centuries CE). The aphorisms of the *Chaldean Oracles* have since been reconstituted from commentaries and quotations made by early pagan and Christian authors.

According to Chaldean teaching:

- - The planetary spheres were conceived as a series of concentric spheres extending as far as the sphere of the zodiac of fixed stars, with the Earth held fast at the centre.
 - - Sublunary bodies (between the Earth and the Moon's orbit) are of mixed nature: they are formed of varying blends of the four ever-interchanging elements, earth, water, fire and air, and so are subject to generation and corruption.
 - - Bodies situated beyond the lunar orbit are, on the contrary, formed of pure fire or of a fifth quintessence whose designation (ether) derives from the unceasing motion of its essence (*tein aei*: ever running). It follows that all celestial bodies are incorruptible. With respect to the Earth, their ranking is defined by their period of revolution round the zodiac: the slower the star's motion, the further it is from the Earth. This supposition fixed the 'Chaldean Order' referred to from the 2nd century BCE onward.²
- Each of the spheres was presided over by a god, as listed below, starting from the first sphere encircling the Earth:
- - the sphere of the lunar goddess Hecate, described by the Moon's orbit;
 - - the sphere of Hermes, described by the planet Mercury's orbit round the sphere of the Moon;
 - - the sphere of Aphrodite, described by the planet Venus' orbit embracing the sphere of Mercury;
 - - the sphere of Apollo - that of the Sun - containing the spheres of the Moon, Mercury and Venus;
 - - the sphere of Ares (Mars);
 - - the sphere of Zeus (Jupiter);
 - - the sphere of Chronos (Saturn);
 - - lastly, the seven planetary spheres (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) were embraced by an eighth, the sphere of the fixed stars comprising the Zodiac;
 - - then came the spheres situated beyond the planets: the sphere of the gods who reside beyond the planetary spheres; the sphere of the Demiurge in charge of creation; and the sphere of the First Intelligence. Finally, beyond the universe thus far expounded, the Creator of the world, He Whom the *Chaldean Oracles* name 'Father'.³

¹ The word 'Chaldean' originally referred to the priestly caste of Babylon, but later designated their Greek and Egyptian disciples. The stamp of Greek philosophy and astronomy had much modified and developed the original Babylonian teaching.

² This is likewise the order followed by the rulers of the planetary hours, the rulers of the Egyptian decans (sometimes referred to as 'faces'), and the planets on the Tree of Life in the Jewish Kabbalah.

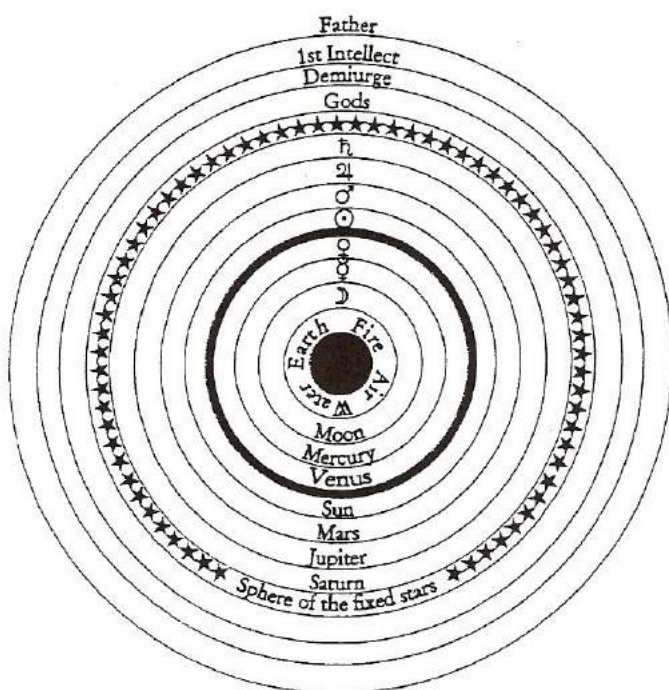
³ Metaphorically, the 'Creator' is the architect who designs the universe and whose plan, the 'First Intelligence', is followed by the

The Formulation Of This Vision Of The World

This system was long in maturing. The regularity of celestial revolutions led the Babylonians to deduce that these were the work of an ordering intelligence, hence they assimilated the stars to sidereal gods. Pythagoras had promulgated the doctrine of the perfection of the sphere which, he supposed, must be the natural form of the Earth and of the starry heaven. He therefore taught that the Earth was a sphere at rest at the centre of the world. Eudoxus of Cnidus (born c.408 BCE) formulated the theory of concentric, or more precisely, homocentric spheres. This system would later inspire the golden age of Scholasticism, and through the medium of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Aristotle had integrated the system of homocentric spheres into his *Physics*, endowing the hitherto purely geometric spheres with physical properties. This was inherited by the Greek astronomer and astrologer Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century CE). For him the planetary spheres were 'etheric shells' causing the planets to move along their orbits.

In apparent ignorance of its profound meaning and in firm adherence to the Aristotelian line, he expounded the system as an astronomical model and explained astrology in terms of 'celestial influences' with no religious or philosophic connotation. Thus, the theory according to which the Earth is at the centre of the universe, with the other planets revolving round it, formed the basis of the geocentric astronomical so-called 'Ptolemaic System'.

False on the physical plane, where Ptolemy stood, this system is 'true' from the symbolic point of view of the human geometric soul, in the sense that, from the very beginning, man on Earth has always seen the Moon and the planets revolving round him.



The universe according to the Chaldean Oracle

The Incarnation Of The Soul

In Chaldean theology the spheres were the worlds presided over by the planetary gods; worlds traversed by souls on their way to incarnation and on their ascension after death. In the dream of Scipio, which ends Book VI of his *De Republica*, Cicero explicitly states: 'To men is imparted a soul emanated from those eternal fires you call stars and luminaries which, round and spherical, quickened by divine spirits, perform their revolutions and perambulate their orbits with an admirable celerity.'

According to these teachings, the human soul lives in the celestial world. Then it enters the terrestrial world through conception and birth, acquiring a physical body. On its way to incarnation the soul traverses the planetary spheres, assuming a subtle, also known as 'astral', body⁴. Just as in earthly life the native will each day put on a series of garments, from light underclothes to heavy overcoat, so the incandescent flame of the human soul, in the course of its descent from its universe of origin into the terrestrial body, assumes a vesture formed of the substances of the spheres it traverses.

This astral body comprises 'virtues' (qualities and instincts) received from the planetary spheres traversed. Since this involves on one hand the planetary spheres, while on the other their traversal takes place outside time to end in birth into our terrestrial sphere, these qualities are reflected in the configuration of the planets at the moment of birth. Macrobius' *Commentary On The Dream Of Scipio* describes the descent through the planetary spheres thus:

"souls freed of all material contagion dwell in heaven; but those who, from this abode on high, where they are bathed in a light eternal, have cast a downward glance at bodies and at what is here below called life, and who have conceived for life a secret desire, are dragged little by little down toward the nether regions of the world, by nought but the weight of this earthbound thought. Yet no sudden fall is this, but by degrees. The soul, perfectly incorporeal, assumes not at once the gross mantle of corporeal clay, but imperceptibly, and through a chain of adulterations suffered one by one as it recedes from the pure and simple substance wherein once it dwelt, to gird and swell itself with substance of the planets. For, in each of the spheres placed beneath the heaven of fixed stars, it swathes itself in several layers of ethereal matter which, imperceptibly, form an intermediary bond by which it is united with the earthly body; so that it suffers as many degradations or as many deaths as spheres traversed." (Ch.XII)

The qualities acquired by the soul in the course of its descent through the spheres are thus described:

"and in its descent, not only does it [the soul] assume the aforesaid new sheath of matter from these luminous bodies, but it receives there the different faculties it must exercise throughout its sojourn in the body. From Saturn it acquires reason and understanding, or what is called the logical and contemplative faculty; from Jupiter it receives the power to act, or executive power; Mars gives it the valour required for enterprise, and a burning zeal; from the Sun it receives the senses and the power of invention,

⁴'Demiurge' in charge of building the universe.

that make it feel and imagine; Venus moves it with desires; from the sphere of Mercury it takes the power to express and enunciate what it thinks and feels; finally, from the sphere of the Moon, it acquires the strength needed to propagate by the generation and increase of bodies. This lunar sphere, which is last and lowest with respect to divine bodies, is first and highest with respect to earthly bodies. This lunar body, as it were the sediment of celestial matter, at the same time is found to be the purest substance of animal matter." (Ch.XII)

This teaching underlies the practice of genethliacal astrology as it was originally conceived. In the nativity the 'Chaldeans' saw a chart of the astral bodies, as the journey through the planetary spheres had structured them. Correctly interpreted, this chart would reveal the native's constituent parts, material or more subtle. It would speak of his daimon, the guardian angel who would accompany him on his voyage here below and watch over the fulfilment of his fate⁴. It would describe, therefore, the earthly existence which had devolved upon him.

The Ascension Of The Soul

The *Poimandres*, first treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, reveals what happens at death and after death. In order to return in pristine purity to the divine, the soul must effect a divestment, in reverse order, of the astral raiment it has donned. The soul first quits the material element encountered in the last place, namely the stuff of nature, that is the body furnished by nature. In the last place it quits the first material element encountered in its fall, namely the astral vestment of the highest sphere. Death entails a sequence of effects:

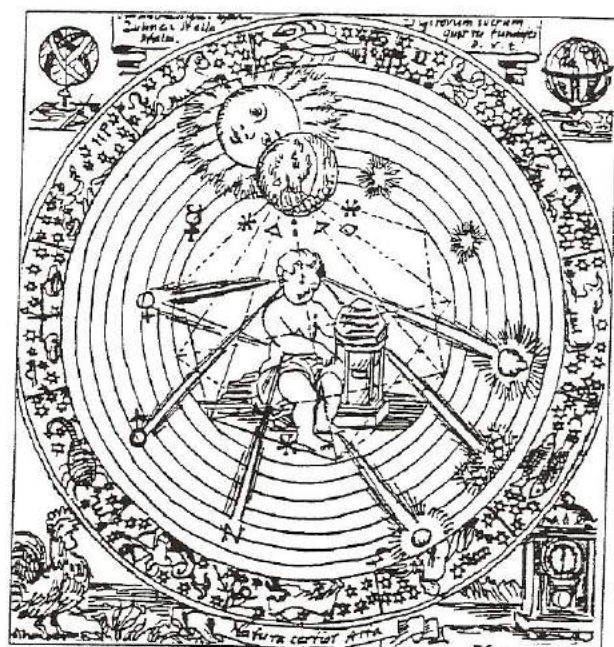
- - the body is consigned to dissolution, and the visible form disappears;
- - the temperament (subject in each case to the individual blend of the four elements), henceforth inert, is consigned to the personal daimon (the guardian angel which, at birth, takes charge of the newborn);
- - the bodily senses return to their respective planetary sources.
- - ire and lust, irrational passions, revert to unreasoning nature.

After this first divestment, the soul begins its ascension. Soaring upward through the armature of spheres, it casts off at each station the passion assumed there in the course of its descent: at the 1st station (Moon), the faculty of increase and decrease; at the 2nd (Mercury), malice and cunning; at the 3rd (Venus), the illusion of desire; at the 4th (Sun), the passion for command; at the 5th (Mars), audacity and temerity; at the 6th (Jupiter), the lust for wealth; at the 7th (Saturn), the falsehood that ensnares.

"And thereupon, stripped of the vestments generated by the armature of spheres, the logos enters the ogdoadic essence (the 8th heaven, of pure ether, pure light), having nought now save its own power." (*Corpus Hermeticum* 1.26).

⁴ Note the origin of the expressions 'astral body' and 'sidereal body'.

⁵ Certain philosophers considered this fate inexorable. Neoplatonic philosophers and hermeticists were not so rigid. Recognising its existence, they were able to loosen certain of its constraints. Iamblichus (in *The Mysteries of Egypt*) recalled that the particular character of the personal daimon was judged according to the strongest planet in the nativity, and around 263-8 AD Porphyry wrote: "Blessed is he who, knowing his geniture and ipso facto his own daimon, exorcises fate."



The Geocentric System

Beyond the threshold of the world stands the firmament (from the Latin *firmamentum*: pillar, support), the vault of heaven, pillar of the stars, named 'sphere of the fixed stars'. The Earth, or rather the observer is located at the centre. The Moon is the nearest planet. She receives and transmits to the observer the action of all the other celestial agencies. Then, from the nearest planet to the furthest: Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn.

But it mounts yet higher, to the very Powers divine who reside above the ogdoadic essence. It becomes in turn a Power, and enters into God.

"For such is the blessed consummation for those possessed of gnosis: to become God." (*Corpus Hermeticum* 1.26).

This ascension to the Powers divine is not, however, automatic, the spheres being equally obstacles impossible to overcome. Since the soul's existence as a human being determines the heaven it can attain upon divestment, it risks being unable to traverse one or other of the spheres and plunging back into terrestrial existence. By fasting and prayer, by sacred rites and the aid of mediating powers (gods for the Greeks or Egyptians, angelic hierarchies for the medieval magi) incarnate man can ease from here below his divestment and his inner transmutation.

The Divestment Of The Metals

"Seven are the passages to perfection of matter,"

— wrote Cagliostro in the *Catechism for the Apprentice of the Egyptian Lodge*. Like many other alchemists, Pernety speaks of 'washing', adding that this involves passage through the seven planets, effected by seven successive workings which lead from the different states of Mercury, symbolised by the alchemical metals, to the state of gold.⁶ In

the light of what has just been expounded are such texts illumined⁷.

To be admitted to initiation in the Masonic Order, the layman must divest himself of his metals. Since each metal belongs to a planet this divestment must be intended to show the shedding of the planetary vestures, that the being may contemplate the true light.

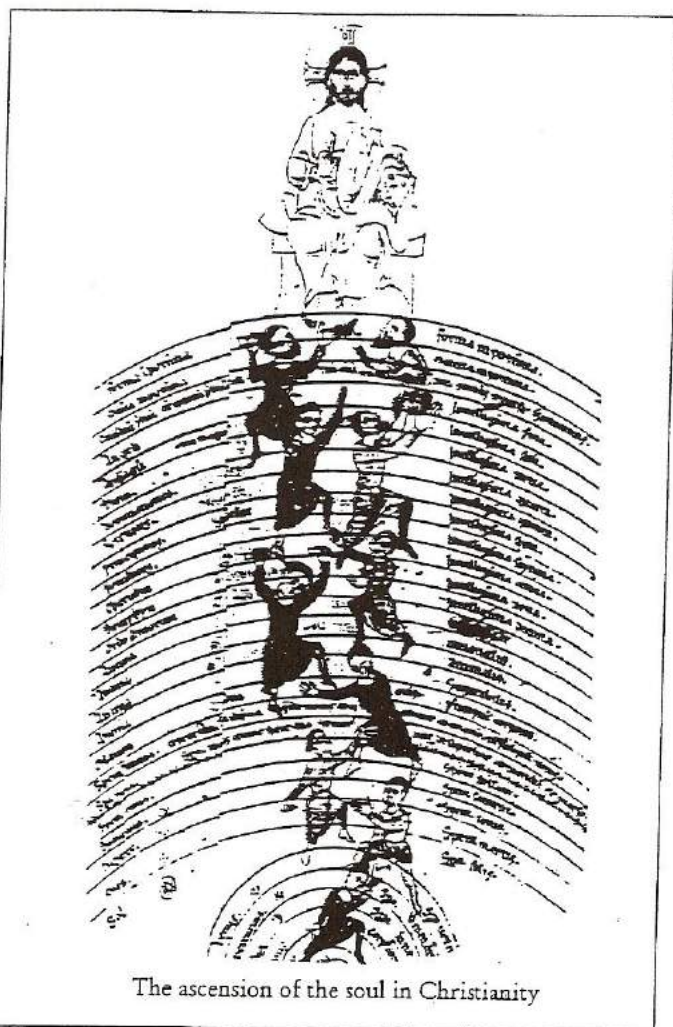
At the 28th Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite,⁸ likewise adopted by the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraim, the candidate is made Knight of the Sun. During a first part of his initiation he is regaled successively in seven cloaks of different colours, draped round him by the seven ministrant angels of the seven planets. During a second part, he divests himself of each of these cloaks. He is at last allowed to contemplate the Sun.

The Attitude Of Christianity

(Taken for the most part from R. Powell's excellent *History of the Planets* — see bibliography)

Christianity tried to eliminate paganism but in fact half the Chaldean doctrine was Christianised. The soul's descent into incarnation was discarded, but its ascension post mortem through the planetary spheres was retained. For the pagan gods presiding over the planetary spheres Christian teaching substituted the celestial hierarchies described in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius. These hierarchies were conceived of in ascending rank, each attributed to a planetary sphere: Angels - sphere of the Moon; Archangels - sphere of Mercury; Principalities - sphere of Venus; Powers - sphere of the Sun; Virtues - sphere of Mars; Dominions - sphere of Jupiter; Thrones - sphere of Saturn; Cherubim - sphere of the zodiac of fixed stars; Seraphim - sphere of crystal. It was considered that after death the human soul reascended the planetary spheres to attain the Empyrean. There, beyond the planetary spheres and the sphere of fixed stars, sat the Holy Trinity. Dante's *Divine Comedy* depicts this ascension of the soul through the planetary spheres and the corresponding ranks of the different hierarchies.

Christianity has recognised the principle of the soul's survival and reascension through the planetary spheres after death. Ancient Chaldean theology recognised in addition the soul's pre-existence and descent through the planetary spheres into incarnation. One simple gesture would have allowed the two teachings to merge in harmony. This was undertaken only by certain gnostic, kabbalistic and initiatory communities.



The ascension of the soul in Christianity

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Translator's Note:

*English versions of these texts are available. The two titles by the author, like his other excellent works on traditional astrology of east and west, have not as yet been translated into English.



⁶ See also Marconis, J.-Et. *Travaux Complets Des Sublimes Maitres Du Grand-Oeuvre* (Complete Labours of the Sublime Masters of the Great Work), Paris, 1866, p.25: "The second goal was to seek the means to redeem matter, which it was believed had also fallen; the seven metals, each of which bore the name of a planet, formed the ascending ladder of material purification corresponding to the moral ordeals of the seven heavens;..."

⁷ These texts remain incomprehensible to the astrologer unversed in the vision of the world that presided at their formulation. The hermetic conception of astrology stands at the very antipodes of the psychological astrology generally practised in Europe at the close of the 20th century. The latter's aim is to get man to make the most of the conditioning and 'potential' with which he is born. The goal of hermetic astrology is, on the contrary, to aid man to divest himself of this conditioning and potential, thus to witness the transformation of an existence and a universe into ever brighter reflection of the divine flame which abides beyond the planetary forces. The psychological thrust of modern astrology is the quest for happiness on earth; the metaphysical thrust of traditional astrology is the quest for freedom in heaven. The real question for the astrologer is not "to what extent is it more-or-less possible to use my free will to live best?", rather "I recognise the power of the conditioning which girds my inmost being. Can I regain my freedom and, if so, how?" This is the question answered by spiritual and initiatory techniques of all times.

⁸ The earliest textual versions of the Degree of Knight of the Sun date from the end of the 18th century. Essentially they represent a mode of instruction in alchemy. Revisions made in the second half of the 19th century accentuate the astrological interpretation.

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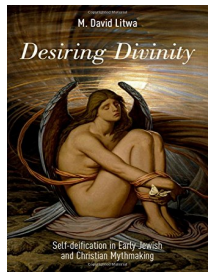
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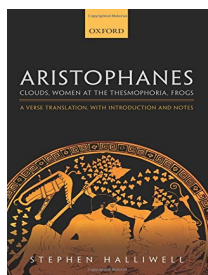
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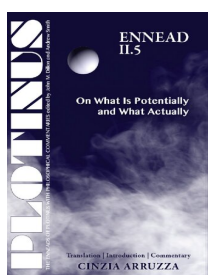
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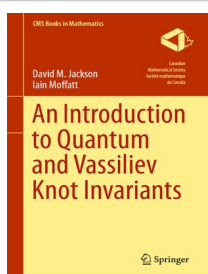
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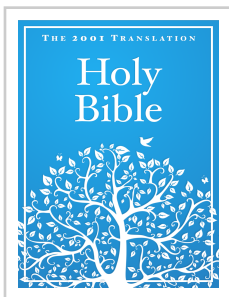
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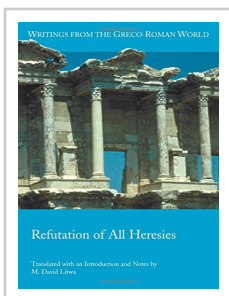
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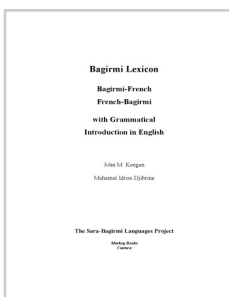
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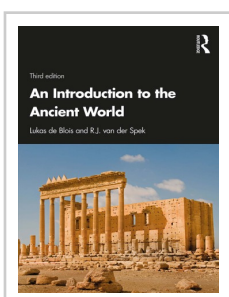
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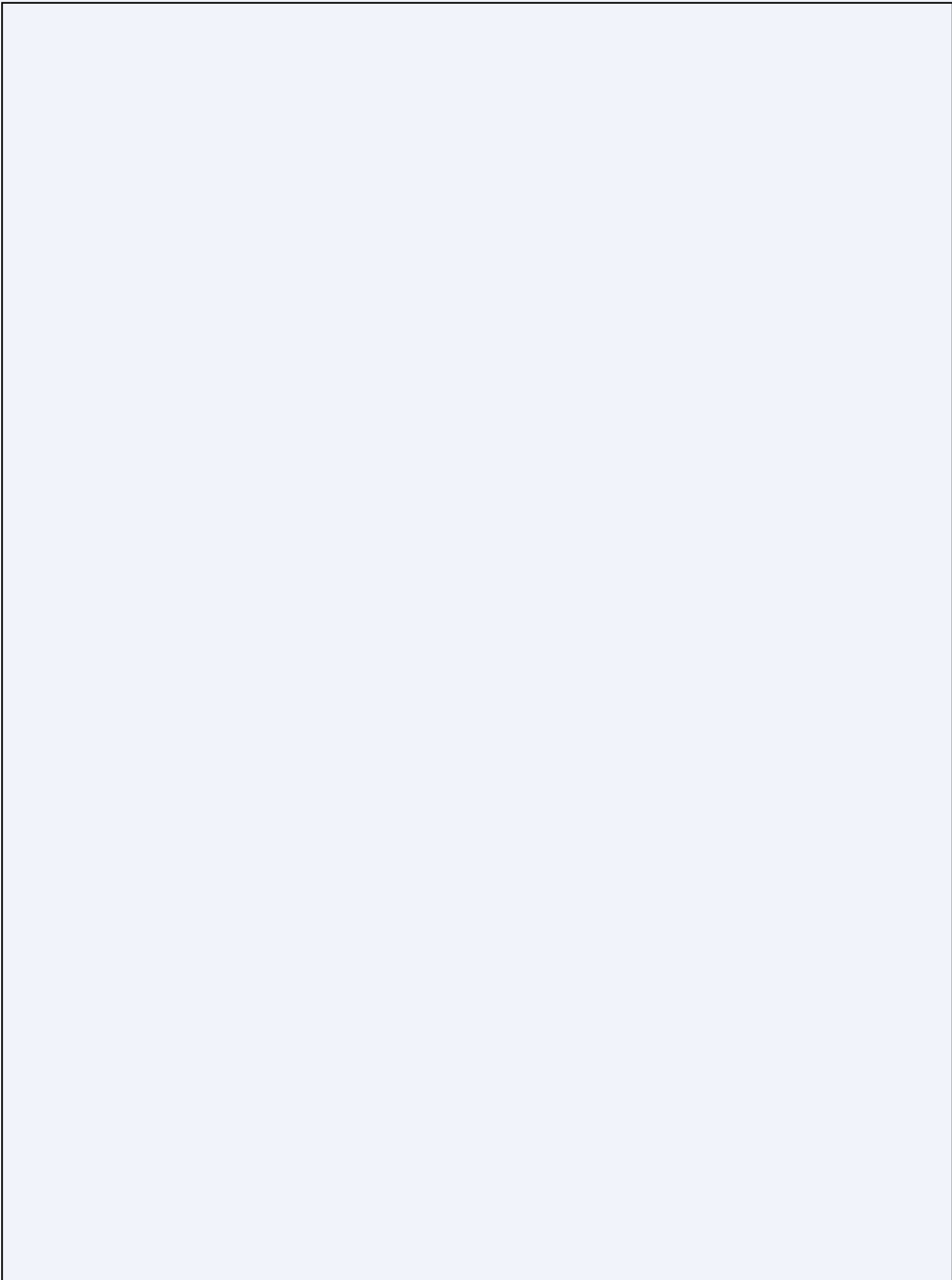
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Testimonies in an English Translation with Notes and
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Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Melbourne



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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107182530

DOI: 10.1017/9781316856567

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First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Control Number: 2017057603

ISBN 978-1-107-18253-0 Hardback

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For Sam, Annie, Alex, and Eve
שבת שלום

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Preface

Despite widespread interest in the *Hermetica* across the globe, currently there does not exist a reliable and up-to-date English translation of the various Hermetic fragments and testimonies. Indeed, some of these fragments and testimonies remain generally unknown.

At the turn of the twentieth century, G. R. S. Mead made a translation of select fragments into Victorian English from now-outdated editions. The translation of the fragments by Walter Scott (1924) was based on his own re-written Greek text – a jungle of emendations and transpositions. When it came to testimonies, moreover, Scott did not actually translate the Greek or Latin texts. He only rendered into English (via Latin translations) texts originally written in Arabic.

The present translation serves a new generation of scholarly and lay readers of the *Hermetica*. It remains faithful to – though critically engaged with – the various manuscript traditions. Copious notes provide historical background, parallels, and references for further reading. Included also are many testimonies that Scott did not print. It is hoped that this volume will spark interest in the full reception history of the *Hermetica*, which must include Late Antiquity and the medieval period.

Here I gratefully acknowledge persons who read parts of the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions: Brian P. Copenhaver, David Runia, and Christian H. Bull. Christian Wildberg and Kevin Van Bladel also kindly answered my inquiries and provided guidance based on their expertise. My thanks also to Oxford University Press for the use of Van Bladel's translations of Arabic source materials.

Abbreviations

<i>ANRW</i>	Haase and others, eds., <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>Ascl.</i>	The Latin <i>Asclepius</i>
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
<i>CCAG</i>	<i>Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum</i> , 11 vols., 1898–1912
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CH	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i>
<i>CH Deutsch</i>	Holzhausen, ed., <i>Das Corpus Hermeticum Deutsch</i> , 2 vols., 1997
Copenhaver	Copenhaver, trans., <i>Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum</i> , 1992
<i>DGWE</i>	Hanegraaff, ed., <i>Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism</i> , 2006.
DH	<i>Definitions of Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius</i>
DK	Diels and Kranz, eds., <i>Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 6th edition
<i>Disc. 8–9</i>	<i>Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth</i> (NHC VI,6)
<i>DPA</i>	Richard Goulet, ed., <i>Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques</i> , 5 vols., 1989–
F	Codex Farnesius
FH	Hermetic Fragments from various sources
FHSG	Fortenbaugh, Huby, Sharples, and Gutas, eds., <i>Theophrastus of Eresus</i> , 1992
<i>HHE</i>	Mahé, <i>Hermès en Haute-Égypte</i> , 2 vols., 1978–82.
LS	Long and Sedley, eds., <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i> , 2 vols., 1987
MSS	Manuscripts
<i>Mystique</i>	Festugière, <i>Hermétisme et mystique païenne</i> , 1967

NF	Nock and Festugière, eds., <i>Corpus Hermeticum</i> , 4 vols., 1945–54
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codices
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NRSV	The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
OF	Bernabé, ed., <i>Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta</i> , 2005
OH	Oxford Hermetic Fragments
OLD	P. G. W. Glare, ed., <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . 1968–82
OTP	Charlesworth, ed., <i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , 2 vols., 1983–85
P	Codex Parisinus gr. 2129
PG	Migne, ed., <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , 162 vols., 1857–86
PW	Pauly and Wissowa, eds., <i>Realencyclopädie</i> , 83 vols., 1893–1982
Ref.	<i>Refutation of All Heresies</i>
RHT	Festugière, <i>La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste</i> , 4 vols., 2nd edn., 1949–54
SC	Sources Chrésiennes
Scarpi	Scarpi, ed., <i>La Rivelazione segreta di Ermete Trismegisto</i> , 2 vols., 2009–11
SH	Stobaeon Hermetic Excerpts
SVF	Von Arnim, ed., <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
TH	Hermetic Testimonies
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VH	Vienna Hermetic Fragments

General Introduction

There are five groups of philosophical Hermetic writings that do not appear in Brian P. Copenhaver's 1992 English translation entitled *Hermetica: The Greek "Corpus Hermeticum" and the Latin "Asclepius"*.¹ The first is the large group of Hermetic excerpts from Stobaeus, an early fifth-century CE anthologist. The second is the Coptic Hermetica (discovered in 1945) featuring two excerpts of previously known writings in addition to a formerly unknown Hermetic tractate (the *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth*). The third group is the collection of Hermetic *Definitions*, a set of maxims extant in Greek fragments but preserved only fully in Armenian. The fourth is the previously known set of diverse fragments quoted by various (largely Christian) authors in Late Antiquity. The fifth comprises recently discovered Hermetic fragments currently preserved in Vienna and Oxford.

The Coptic Hermetica are widely available in English translations of the Nag Hammadi library.² The *Definitions* are now conveniently accessible in English thanks to the work of Jean-Pierre Mahé.³ What remains to be translated are the fragments from Stobaeus, the fragments and testimonies from various authors, and the fragments from the newly discovered papyri.

¹ Copenhaver's introduction to CH and *Ascl.* remain relevant (Copenhaver, xxxii–xlv). See also Peter Kingsley, "An Introduction to the Hermetica: Approaching Ancient Esoteric Tradition," in Roelof van den Broek and Cis van Heertum, eds., *From Poimandres to Jacob Böhme: Gnosis: Hermetism and the Christian Tradition* (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2000), 17–40.

² See Marvin Meyer, ed., *Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 409–36. Introductions to the Coptic Hermetica can be found in *ibid.*, 409–12; 419–21; 425–29; Mahé, *HHE*, 1.31–51, 137–55; 2.47–144; Hans-Martin Schenke, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, and Ursula Ulrike Kaiser, eds., *Nag Hammadi Deutsch: Studienausgabe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 359–60; 367–68; 370–71.

³ Mahé's translation can be found in Clement Salaman and others, trans., *The Way of Hermes: New Translations of "The Corpus Hermeticum" and "The Definitions of Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius"* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2000), 109–22. Mahé introduces the Armenian *Definitions* in *ibid.*, 101–8.

It is high time to present a new translation and annotation of these (chiefly philosophical) Hermetica to the English-speaking world.

Hermes-Thoth

Nothing binds together the multifarious Hermetic fragments beyond their ascription to Hermes Thrice Great. Hermes Thrice Great is a fictional character. Yet for many in the ancient world that fiction was history. If we call Hermes Thrice Great a “myth,” we thereby recognize that he is greater and more significant than any one historical figure. How do we introduce a figure that appears in so many different ages in so many different guises? If there was an “original” Hermes Thrice Great, we are obliged to pick up the thread at significant points of reception.

Iamblichus (about 245–325 CE) commences his book (later called *On the Mysteries*) with the following flourish:

Hermes, the deity who presides over rational discourses, has long and rightly been considered common to all who practice the sacred arts. He who presides over true science concerning gods is one and the same throughout the universe. It is to him that our ancestors dedicated the discoveries of their wisdom, attributing all their own writings to Hermes.⁴

Important here is the frank acknowledgement that many authors wrote under the name of Hermes. The practice of pseudepigraphy was logical for devotees of Hermes.⁵ True wisdom and learning merited ascription to the lord of all learning. This is why many Egyptian scholars attributed their writings to Hermes. Iamblichus, himself writing under a false name (“Abammon,” an Egyptian priest), calls these writers his “ancestors.” These “ancestors” were probably Hellenized Egyptian scribes and priests who lived not very long before Iamblichus himself.

Later, Iamblichus gives a taste of how many persons were writing under the name of Hermes. In *On the Mysteries* 8.1, he passes on the report of a certain Seleucus, who attributed to Hermes a total of 20,000 books. A better-known source, the Egyptian priest and historian Manetho, nearly

⁴ Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 1.1.

⁵ On Hermetic pseudepigraphy, see Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 85–98; and more generally, Bart D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11–145; 534–48.

doubled this number, crediting Hermes with 36,525 volumes (or 100 volumes for each single day in a 4-year period).⁶ So many books would easily fill the shelves of a large temple library (the Egyptian “House of Life”). Perhaps this is the point – all the wisdom of the Egyptian sacred priesthood ultimately reverts to Hermes.

According to Iamblichus, Hermes wrote hundreds of tomes on specialized topics like “the gods in the fiery zone,” “the gods in the aether,” and “the gods in the heavens.”⁷ Hermes was the ultimate theologian, yet the scope of his expertise was in fact more vast. There are existing treatises on astrology, the virtues of stones, the principles of creation, the origin and nature of the soul, alchemical practices, Fate, the effects of climate on intelligence, healing, and even why children resemble their parents – all ascribed to Hermes.⁸

The many genres of Hermetic learning are well illustrated by a passage in Clement of Alexandria. This Christian writer around 200 CE describes a procession of Egyptian officials in which forty-two fundamental writings of Hermes were displayed (the number of Egypt’s districts or “nomes”). The highest-ranking priest, whom the Greeks called “Prophet,” carried the ten “hieratic” books on laws, the gods, and the training of priests. The Stolee-keeper presented ten books on education and sacrifice. The Sacred Scribe held up a decade of books on hieroglyphs, geography, and the temples. Then came the Astrologer, who showed four books on astronomical matters (fixed stars, planets, conjunctions, and the risings of astral bodies). Finally, the Singer held in his hands a songbook and an instruction manual for kings. As a supplement, six books on medical matters (anatomy, medicines, medical instruments, and gynecology) were displayed.⁹ All this vast store of knowledge was ascribed to Hermes.

Who was this Hermes? We must first of all distinguish a Greek deity from a significantly different Egyptian one. The Greek Hermes was the “winged son of kindly Maia,” racing on the winds as Zeus’s crafty herald,

⁶ The number has yet deeper significance in Egyptian astrology, as pointed out by Christian H. Bull, “The Tradition of Hermes: The Egyptian Priestly Figure as a Teacher of Hellenized Wisdom” (Ph.D. diss., University of Bergen, 2014), 82–83.

⁷ Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, 8.1–2.

⁸ See, for instance, the small treatises *On Earthquakes* and the *Brontologion* attributed to Hermes Thrice Great in CCAG 7.167–71; 226–30.

⁹ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 6.4.35.1–6.4.38.1. On books in temple libraries, see further Serge Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt*, new edition, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 110–67; Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 57–60; Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 75, 135–36, 201 nn.35–36.

helmeted with the cap of invisibility, wielding the twisted caduceus with the power to put even Argus with his hundred eyes to sleep.¹⁰ The Egyptian Hermes, on the other hand, was Thoth, depicted as the ibis-headed scribe of the gods, secretary of Re, giver of oracles, master of magic, lord of the moon often appearing in the form of a dog-faced baboon. When the Greeks dominated Egypt, they identified the Egyptian god Thoth with Hermes. But why? What did they see in these two gods that was similar?

There are several overlaps, yet we will focus on two.¹¹ First of all, Hermes as *psychopomp*, or escort of the dead, resembled Thoth as seen in the various versions of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* (or the *Book of Going Forth by Day*), chapter 125. In the Hall of Two Truths, Thoth hears the confession of the deceased person. After the person's heart is weighed against the feather of Maat ("Justice," or "Truth"), Thoth carefully inscribes the result with his tablet and stylus. If the heart is pure, Thoth leads the candidate into the presence of Osiris, the ultimate judge of the dead, and finally into the Field of Reeds.¹² Perhaps the most famous scene of Hermes leading souls is the opening of Homer's *Odyssey*, book 24. In this scene, Hermes guides the freshly slaughtered suitors of Penelope to the netherworld. Mindless, the suitors squeak like bats on their way to the halls of Hades.

Yet there was a more basic similarity between Hermes and Thoth. Hermes is more than a herald or messenger. He is the Logos – the Reason, Speech, or Word of God.¹³ The Word devises speech and brings his own interpretation, which the Greeks called *hermeneia*.¹⁴ Thoth is also the god who presides over speech and interpretation. He is called "the heart of Re, the tongue of Atum, the throat of the God whose name is hidden." As

¹⁰ The "winged son of kindly Maia" derives from Horace, *Odes*, 1.3.

¹¹ Other similarities between Thoth and Hermes are catalogued by Maria-Theresia Derchain-Urtel, *Thot à travers ses épithètes dans les scènes d'offrandes des temples d'époque gréco-romaine* (Brussels: Egyptology Foundation Queen Elizabeth, 1981), 136–46; Andreas Löw, *Hermes Trismegistos als Zeuge der Wahrheit: Die christliche Hermetikrezeption von Athenagoras bis Laktanz*, Theophaneia 36 (Berlin: Philo, 2002), 26–29.

¹² See Raymond O. Faulkner, trans., *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, ed. Carol Andrews (London: British Museum, 1985), 28 (spell 30b); C. J. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth: Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 145–50.

¹³ For Hermes as Logos (or Word), see Ref. 5.7.32; Seneca, *On Benefits* 4.7; Cornutus, *Nature of the Gods* 16; Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 72; Acts 14:12; Varro in Augustine, *City of God* 7.14; Justin, *First Apology* 1.22; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 54 (*Moralia* 373b).

¹⁴ For devising speech, see Plato, *Cratylus* 407e–408b; compare Diodorus, *Library of History* 1.16 (τὰ περὶ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν).

divine speech personified, Thoth is also a creator. “What bursts from his heart has immediate existence; what he pronounces exists for eternity.”¹⁵

In the Hellenistic period (roughly 323–31 BCE), Greeks living in Egypt and Hellenized Egyptians crafted an amalgam of Thoth and Hermes who was called “the Egyptian Hermes” or later “Hermes Thrice Greatest” (*Trismegistos*, *Termaximus*). This Hermes is superlatively great in a superlative (threefold) way. Following English convention, however, here we call “Thrice Greatest Hermes” simply “Hermes Thrice Great.”

Greeks typically conceived of Hermes Thrice Great in a Euhemeristic fashion. That is to say, they often considered him to have been an ancient man – a real scribe of a real Pharaoh, often the first divine Pharaoh called Ammon (the Egyptian god Amun). This scribe, named Thoth or Theuth, invented the alphabet and the art of writing.¹⁶ Ever since, humans have been using writing to preserve the vast array of accumulated knowledge. Thoth was later deified to become a recognized Egyptian god or *daimon* (a kind of mediating deity).¹⁷ Writing was the best-known benefit that Thoth offered to human beings, but it was not the only one.

Greeks attributed to Thoth the invention of a host of other arts. Plato (427–347 BCE) made Thoth the discoverer of mathematics and astronomy.¹⁸ Hecataeus of Abdera (fourth century BCE) ascribed to him the invention of a common language, religious ritual, music, wrestling, dancing, and the culture of the olive.¹⁹ The Jewish writer Artapanus (third

¹⁵ These titles derive from hieroglyphic inscriptions from the temple of Denderah printed in Festugière, *RHT*, 1.69 and Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 394–95. The temple is dated to the time of Nero (mid first century CE). Compare the inscription on the door of the library of the great temple of Philae: “the glorious Ibis who came forth from the heart of the god [Re]; tongue of Tenen [Ptah] when he gives command, throat of him of the hidden name [Amun]” (quoted in Patrick Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt* [London: Oxford University Press, 1922], 214–15). In the Shabaka text, Thoth functions as creator in the form of Ptah (*ibid.*, 119). According to a fourth-century CE papyrus fragment called the *Strasbourg Cosmogony*, Hermes is depicted as creator of the world. For an introduction see Jean-Marie Flamand, “Cosmogonie de Strasbourg,” *DPA* 2.478–80. See further Youri Volokhine, “Le dieu Thot et la parole,” *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 221 (2004): 131–56.

¹⁶ For Thoth the inventor of writing, see Philo of Byblos in Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 1.9.24 (= TH 6a), as well as the writers cited in the next paragraph.

¹⁷ Plato (*Philebus* 18b) expressed uncertainty as to whether Hermes (Thoth) was a god, a *daimon*, or divine man. Perhaps he was a man guided by a *daimon*, as in Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historical Events* 21.14.5 (TH 15). In some Hermetic texts, Hermes Thrice Great is distinguished from his grandfather Thoth (*Ascl.* 37, with Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 174–75). A purely Euhemeristic conception of Hermes Thrice Great is taken up by Christians such as Lactantius, *Wrath of God* 11.12 (with the comments of Löw, *Hermes* 111–13, 140–42), *Institutes* 1.6.3 (= FH 3a); Augustine, *City of God* 18.39 (TH 19b).

¹⁸ Plato, *Phaedrus* 274c–d; 275a. ¹⁹ Diodorus, *Library of History* 1.16.

to second centuries BCE), after identifying Moses with Hermes, makes him the teacher of navigation, deviser of weapons, machines of war, and philosophy.²⁰ According to the Roman orator Cicero (mid first century BCE), Hermes-Thoth “gave the Egyptians their laws and letters.”²¹ In the early first century CE, the Roman poet Manilius called Hermes “first founder of this great and holy science” – meaning astrology.²² The Christian writer Tertullian in the early third century CE dubbed Hermes Thrice Great “teacher of all the natural philosophers.”²³ This tradition of philosophy stretched back to Thales in the sixth century BCE. When one reads these testimonies (printed more fully at the end of this volume), one gains a sense of the vast knowledge ascribed to Hermes.²⁴ There was nary a branch of learning over which the Thrice Great did not preside.

To the question: “Why was the Egyptian Hermes called ‘Thrice Great’?” one can answer: triple greatness was the special prerogative of Thoth.²⁵ A god twice or thrice great was a god supremely great – greater indeed than all his divine competitors (at least in the minds of his devotees).²⁶ Clay shards in the archive of Hor (around 168 BCE) yield a Greek translation of Thoth’s Egyptian epithet: “the greatest, yes, greatest god, great Hermes!”²⁷ In Egyptian, the repetition likely had a

²⁰ Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 9.27.4–6 = frag. 3 in *OTP* 2.898–99. See further Gerard Mussies, “The Interpretatio Judaica of Thot-Hermes,” in M. Heerma van Voss, among others, eds., *Studies in Egyptian Religion Dedicated to Professor Jan Zandee* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 89–120 at 90–108.

²¹ Cicero, *Nature of the Gods* 3.56 (= TH 2). ²² Manilius, *Astronomica* 1.30 (= TH 3).

²³ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 15.1 (= FH 1a). See further Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 198.

²⁴ See in particular TH 21 from Cyril of Alexandria.

²⁵ Florian Ebeling notes that, “From the second millennium BCE on, Thoth was revered as the ‘twice great,’ which was then escalated into ‘thrice great,’ that is, ‘greatest of all’” (*The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times*, trans. David Lorton [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007], 30).

²⁶ Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 185–88. Greek usage is analogous. Plutarch comments that, “We customarily express ‘many times’ also by ‘three times,’ just as we say ‘thrice blessed’” (*Isis and Osiris* 36 [Moralia 365c]).

²⁷ Mahé, *HHE*, 1 (μέγιστος καὶ μέγιστος θεὸς μέγας Ἑρμῆς). The text is printed in J. D. Ray, *Archive of Hor* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1976), 2, 159–60; Maria Totti, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1985), 140–44. Alternatively, we could translate: “the greatest and greatest, the great god Hermes.” The exact epithet to which the Greek translation corresponds remains unclear because of the great variation of Thoth’s epithets. These variations are summarily listed by Jan Quaegebeur, “Thot-Hermès, le dieu le plus grand!” in Hartwig Altenmüller, ed., *Hommages à François Daumas*, 2 vols. (Montpellier: University of Montpellier, 1986), 2.525–44 at 537–38. See further Jacques Parlebas, “L’origine égyptienne de l’appellation ‘Hermès Trismégiste,’” *Göttinger Miszellen* 13 (1974): 25–28 with the correctives of Maria-Theresia and Philippe Derchain, “Noch einmal Hermes Trismegistos,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 15 (1975): 7–10; and Bull, “Tradition of Hermes,” 35–38.

distributive sense as well: Thoth is great on every occasion, at all times, in every respect.²⁸

The earliest that Hermes attains the actual epithet “Thrice Great,” it seems, is with Thrasyllus of Alexandria, famous astrologer of the emperor Tiberius (reigned 14–37 CE).²⁹ In Greek, threeness evokes the notion of perfection and pluri-potentiality. Hermes is the greatest god, and his manifold powers were available in multiple ways. In this respect, Martial’s playful line about the gladiator called Hermes ironically sums up the essence of the Greco-Egyptian god: “Hermes – all things in one and thrice unique!”³⁰

As the god of human sciences, both esoteric and empirical, Hermes Thrice Great remained a fundamentally Egyptian deity. The Greek Hermes was never really a scholar or patron of scholars until Late Antiquity.³¹ Though “an interpreter, a messenger, a thief and a deceiver in words,” the Greek Hermes was never a scribe. Yet writing and the scribal wisdom it represents were associated with Thoth centuries before the Homeric Hermes.

The Egyptian character of the Thrice Great is highlighted in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (PGM). These papyri are priceless testimonies of Egyptian domestic religion from the first to the fourth centuries CE. In a hymn recorded in PGM 5.400–21, Hermes is called, “Ruler of the world,” the “circle of Moon,” the “founder of the words of speech, pleader of Justice’s cause . . . eye of the Sun . . . founder of full-voiced speech,” sender of oracles, universal healer, and the one “who brings full mental powers.” In a slightly longer version of the hymn, Hermes is called lord of the elements, helmsman of the world, and the world’s very order.³² The creative role of Hermes is further underscored in PGM 7.551–57, where he is, “the one who [made] the four quarters of the heaven and the four foundations of the earth.” According to PGM 13.270–77, Thoth, much like the Hebrew god, “brings existence out of the nonexistent, and nonexistence from

²⁸ Quaegebeur, “Thot-Hermès,” in Altenmüller, ed., *Hommages à François Daumas*, 2.537. See also H. S. Versnel, *Ter Unus: Isis, Dionysus, and Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 237–44.

²⁹ Thrasyllus (ὁ λεγόμενος Τρισημέσιος Ἑρμῆς). The fragment comes from Thrasyllus’s *Pinax (or Tablet) for Hieroclea* (= TH 4). Later attestations of the “Thrice Great” title occur in the early to mid second century with Philo of Byblos from Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* 1.10.17 (= TH 6); and Athenagoras, *Embassy* 28.3 (= TH 7). See further Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 26, 162, 216–17; Löw, *Hermes*, 41–46; Bull, “Tradition of Hermes,” 38–40.

³⁰ Martial, *Epigrams* 5.24.15 (*Hermes omnia solus et ter unus*). Compare CH 16.3: the Father of the universe is “the all who is one and the one who is all.” See further Versnel, *Ter Unus*, 227–51; Löw, *Hermes*, 30–40.

³¹ Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 201–2. ³² PGM 17b.15–19; compare PGM 7.668–85.

existent things . . . the true sight of whose face none of the gods can endure to see.” As universal creator, Hermes is also the universal knower of “the things hidden beneath heaven and earth.”³³

Greek philosophers tapped into the wisdom of Hermes by – according to legend at least – visiting Egypt and sitting at the feet of Hermes’s heirs: Egyptian priests. These priests were naturally reluctant to share their sacred wisdom, but their visitors proved persistent.³⁴ According to tradition, all the greatest philosophers – among them Pythagoras, Solon, Eudoxus, Plato, and Democritus, among many others – came to “study abroad” in Egypt.³⁵ Even if one grants the historicity of these sojourns, one reasonably doubts that all these Greeks learned the specific wisdom later associated with the Thrice Great. Yet if all Egyptian wisdom ultimately derives from Thoth, then Greece’s finest sages could later be viewed as the god’s disciples. Only on occasion, however, is the connection between the philosophers and Hermes himself made explicit. According to Tertullian, Plato was especially intimate with the Egyptian Hermes.³⁶ Iamblichus affirms that Pythagoras and Plato, during their visits to Egypt, carefully studied the stelae (inscribed pillars) of Hermes with the help of native priests.³⁷

By Late Antiquity, Hermes the Egyptian was viewed as the supreme philosopher, or rather the one who stood at the head of the Greek philosophical tradition. Hermes was not a historical author, but he did possess an important “author function.”³⁸ His name guaranteed the antiquity and validity of a host of Greco-Egyptian writings that addressed important scientific and philosophical topics of the time.

³³ *PGM* 8.1–52.

³⁴ See especially the case of Thessalus, discussed by Festugière, *Mystique*, 141–80; Jonathan Z. Smith, “The Temple and the Magician,” in *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), 172–89.

³⁵ For Pythagoras, see Isocrates, *Busiris* 28; for Solon, see Plato, *Timaeus* 21e–22b; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 10 (*Moralia* 354e); for Pythagoras, Plato, and Democritus, see Cicero, *On Ends* 5.87; for Plato and Eudoxus, see Strabo, *Geography* 17.1.29; for Pythagoras and Solon, see Diodorus, *Library of History* 1.69.4; for Solon, Pythagoras, Eudoxus, and Democritus, see *ibid.* 1.96.2; 1.98.2; for Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Solon, and Plato, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historical Events* 22.16.21–22. These and other texts are collected by Heinrich Dörrie, *Der hellenistische Rahmen des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus Bausteine* 36–72: *Text Übersetzung, Kommentar*, vol. 2 of *Der Platonismus in der Antike* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Fromman, 1990), 166–74, with commentary on 425–53. Peter Kingsley argues that Pythagoras’s (i.e. Pythagoras’s trip) trip to Egypt was historical (“From Pythagoras to the *Turba philosophorum*: Egypt and Pythagorean Tradition,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtland Institutes* 57 [1994]: 1–13 at 1–3). See further Sauneron, *Priests*, 110–15.

³⁶ Tertullian, *On the Soul* 2.3 (= FH 1b). ³⁷ Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* 1.2 (= TH 12).

³⁸ Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in R. C. Davis and R. Scheifer, eds., *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, 3rd edn. (New York: Longman, 1994), 262–75.

Yet Hermes the Egyptian meant more than Hermes the ancient sage. His Egyptian identity guaranteed the importance and prestige of Egypt throughout the Hellenistic world. To the Greeks, Hermes Thrice Great represented the wisdom of Egypt, just as Moses came to symbolize the wisdom of the Jews, Ostanes the wisdom of the Persians, and Dandamis the wisdom of India. In terms of the discursive practices of Late Antiquity, the Hermetic writings were deeply Hellenic in form and language. Nevertheless, Hermes never stopped being Egyptian, and the Hermetic writings never lost their Egyptian roots and local color.

Hermetic Communities?

The Hermetic literature refers to named teachers and disciples like Hermes, Tat, Ammon, Isis, Horus, and so on. Do these literary characters reflect a social reality of Hermetic teaching?³⁹ If so, what group did Hermetic teachers belong to or represent? Where did this group or groups meet, and what did they do in their meetings? Theories have come and gone. Richard Reitzenstein initially proposed a kind of Hermetic mother church located in Egypt. By contrast, Jean-André Festugière found, “no trace in the Hermetic literature of ceremonies belonging to supposed believers in Hermes, nothing that resembles sacraments . . . There is no clergy, no appearance of hierarchical organization, no degrees of initiation . . . On the contrary . . . Hermeticism forthrightly expresses its loathing for material acts of worship.”⁴⁰

After the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Hermetic writings, however, Gilles Quispel could declare that, “It is now completely certain that there existed before and after the beginning of the Christian era in Alexandria [Egypt], a secret society, akin to a Masonic lodge. The members of the group called themselves ‘brethren,’ were initiated through a baptism of the Spirit, celebrated a sacred meal and read the Hermetic writings as edifying treatises for their spiritual progress.”⁴¹ More cautiously, Jean-Pierre Mahé observed that the prayers in the Hermetic corpus “provide evidence that there were communities placed under the patronage of Hermes in

³⁹ On spiritual teaching in antiquity, see Richard Valantasis, *Spiritual Guides of the Third Century: A Semiotic Study of the Guide-Disciple Relationship in Christianity, Neoplatonism, Hermetism, and Gnosticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 13–62; Anna van den Kerchove, *Le voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traits hermétiques* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 45–183.

⁴⁰ Festugière, *RHT*, 1.81–84. ⁴¹ Quoted in Salaman and others, *Way of Hermes*, 10.

which . . . prayer, characterized as . . . ‘sacrifice of speech,’ . . . could have the place of a true sacrament.”⁴²

Today, most scholars seem persuaded that references to “pure food,”⁴³ a ritual embrace,⁴⁴ and formal prayers⁴⁵ suggest some sort of ritual and community life.⁴⁶ Christian H. Bull in part revives the idea of Reitzenstein that Hermetic community leaders were Egyptian priests increasingly detached from temple service and administration.⁴⁷ Partial support for this idea comes from the *Book of Thoth*, a book written in an Egyptian priestly language (demotic) which circulated in the first and second centuries CE. In the book, Thoth – or someone who shares his epithets – dialogues with one seeking knowledge. The book emerged from Egyptian priestly circles and deals with native Egyptian lore. Although most of this lore does not overlap with the contents of the philosophical Hermetica, the genre and format of the *Book of Thoth* strongly resembles these writings.⁴⁸

It must be kept in mind, however, that the community life of the Hermetic practitioners is almost entirely reconstructed from the Hermetic texts themselves. External witnesses sometimes refer to Egyptian priests living in temple complexes and passing on their wisdom.⁴⁹ None of these,

⁴² Quoted in Copenhaver, 123. See further R. van den Broek, “Religious Practices in the Hermetic ‘Lodge’: New Light from Nag Hammadi,” in van den Broek, ed., *From Poimandres*, 77–96.

⁴³ *The Prayer of Thanksgiving* (NHC VI,7), 65.6.

⁴⁴ *Disc. 8–9* (NHC VI,6), 57.26–27; *The Prayer of Thanksgiving* (NHC VI,7), 65.4.

⁴⁵ For example, *The Prayer of Thanksgiving* (NHC VI,7), parallel to *Ascl.* 41.

⁴⁶ Van den Kerchove concludes that the “way of Hermes” is “a sequence of concrete ritual practices, some regular, some occasional, some temporary, others developing as a consequence of the disciple’s formation. Some are a simple gesture, like a kiss. Others combine words and gestures like the rite of absorption or certain prayers. Almost all are based on a performative word, that of the teacher” (*Voie*, 374–75). See further S. Giversen, “Hermetic Communities,” in J. P. Sørensen, ed., *Rethinking Religion: Studies in the Hellenistic Process* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1989), 49–54; Gebhard Löhr, *Verherrlichung Gottes durch Philosophie: Der hermetische Traktat II im Rahmen der antiken Philosophie- und Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 385–97; Matthias Heiduk, “Offene Geheimnisse – Hermetische Texte und verborgenes Wissen in der mittelalterlichen Rezeption von Augustinus bis Albertus Magnus” (Ph.D. diss., Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, 2007), 41–59.

⁴⁷ Bull, “Tradition of Hermes,” 437–70; see also David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 198–237; Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 261–74; Françoise Dunand and Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt 3000 BCE to 395 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 210–13; Ian S. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 264–73.

⁴⁸ Richard Jasnow and Karl-Theodor Zauzich, eds., *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: A Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), especially 65–70.

⁴⁹ See especially Chaeremon, frag. 10 (van der Horst) = Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 4.6.8, also printed in Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 54–55, and discussed by P. W. van der Horst, “The Way of Life of the Egyptian Priests according to Chaeremon,” in van Voss, ed., *Studies in Egyptian Religion*, 61–71.

however, refer to what we would call a Hermetic community.⁵⁰ One could imagine a Hermetic community as a kind of philosophical discussion group, a school with a master teacher, a loose collection of individuals seeking salvation through initiatory readings – or a fluid blend of all these models.⁵¹ With regard to Late Antiquity, one should take seriously the proposal of Giulia Sfameni Gasparro that what developed was something like a Hermetic “audience cult.” Such cults “do not display formal organization or constitute structured groups devoted to a dogmatic creed, but rather participate in a common heritage of knowledge and interest.”⁵²

The philosophical treatises of Hermes were religious and initiatory, but they came to be read more and more as school exercises. Like Platonic dialogues, Hermetic dialogues were later dissected for the opinions of Hermes. These opinions were then incorporated into doxographies. Johannes Stobaeus, for instance, quoted Hermes as an ancient philosophical authority for the education of his son. Late Antique Christian authors like Lactantius and Cyril quoted Hermes as a theological authority to prove the antiquity of their creeds. The Hermes of Iamblichus was a theosophical expert explaining a universal way of salvation. Naturally, there were no hard and fast distinctions between what we call theosophy, theology, and philosophy in the ancient world. The point is that Hermes had come to represent an ancient authoritative discourse. For the educated elite, the discourse that interested them tended to be philosophical and scientific. Hermes was an authority on philosophy, medicine, and astronomy because his wisdom lay at the root of all these disciplines. The name “Hermes” meant knowledge, both scientific (*epistēmē*) and spiritual (*gnōsis*).⁵³

Dating

Since Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), the treatises in the Byzantine collection called the *Corpus Hermeticum* (CH) have been dated anywhere from the late first to the late third centuries CE. The *Perfect Discourse* (originally composed in Greek but only fully preserved in a periphrastic Latin translation) probably appeared toward the end of this period. In large part,

⁵⁰ See further Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 156–95; Bull, “Tradition of Hermes,” 4–11.

⁵¹ Heiduk, “Offene,” 58.

⁵² Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, “*Religio mentis*: The Hermetic Process of Individualization,” in Jörg Rüpke, ed., *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 387–434 at 418.

⁵³ For the later reception history of the Hermetica, see Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, xlv–lxi.

this dating is rooted in internal criteria. Writers of the philosophical Hermetica were conversant with Stoicism and Middle Platonism, but not Neoplatonism (which arose in the mid third century).

External witnesses to Hermetic books begin appearing in the second century.⁵⁴ Astrological writings seem to have been ascribed to Hermes as early as the first (some would say second) century BCE. Collections of Hermetic maxims (such as we find in SH 11) may also have appeared around this time.⁵⁵ Hermes-Thoth was recognized as an ancient sage from the time of Plato (the fourth century BCE). He begins to be widely recognized as a philosopher by the early third century CE, as witnessed by Tertullian.⁵⁶

There is no overriding reason to date the Stobaeian and other Hermetic fragments outside the date range of CH (that is, from the late first to the late third centuries CE). Perhaps more precision can be attained with regard to a peculiar collection of Hermetic treatises in which Isis addresses her son Horus (SH 23–26). Lucian in the mid second century CE refers to sacred books of Horus and Isis in the inner shrines of Egyptian temples.⁵⁷ The fact that such books were known in the Greek world made it logical for a Greek-speaking Egyptian to write Hermetic books in the name of Isis.

Walter Scott used external criteria to narrow the date of one particular tractate, namely the *Korē Kosmou* (SH 23). The treatise was written, he proposed, between 263–68 CE since the atrocities spoken of in SH 23.55–61 reflected, according to Scott, the historical calamities in Alexandria between 262–63 CE.⁵⁸ As Scott himself admitted, however, matching generalized literary description to specific historical events is precarious. Slightly more secure is the stylistic criteria pointed out by Eduard Norden: “Meyer’s law of the accentual clausula is largely, though not invariably, observed in an elevated passage of the *Korē Kosmou*.”⁵⁹ Thus on the

⁵⁴ For instance, Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 61 (*Moralia* 375f) (Ἐν δὲ ταῖς Ἑρμοῦ λεγομέναις βίβλοις).

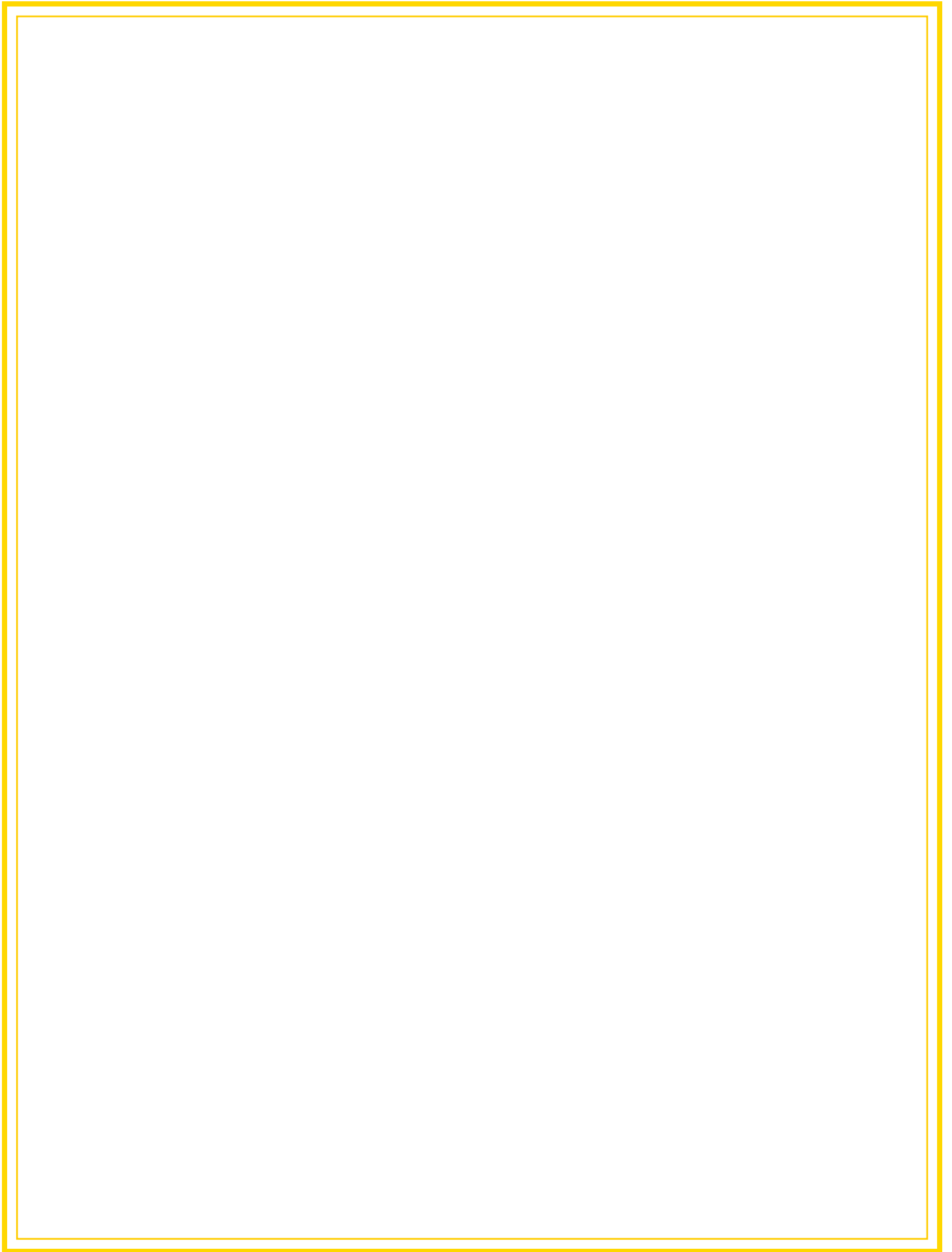
⁵⁵ Mahé, *HHE*, 2.278.

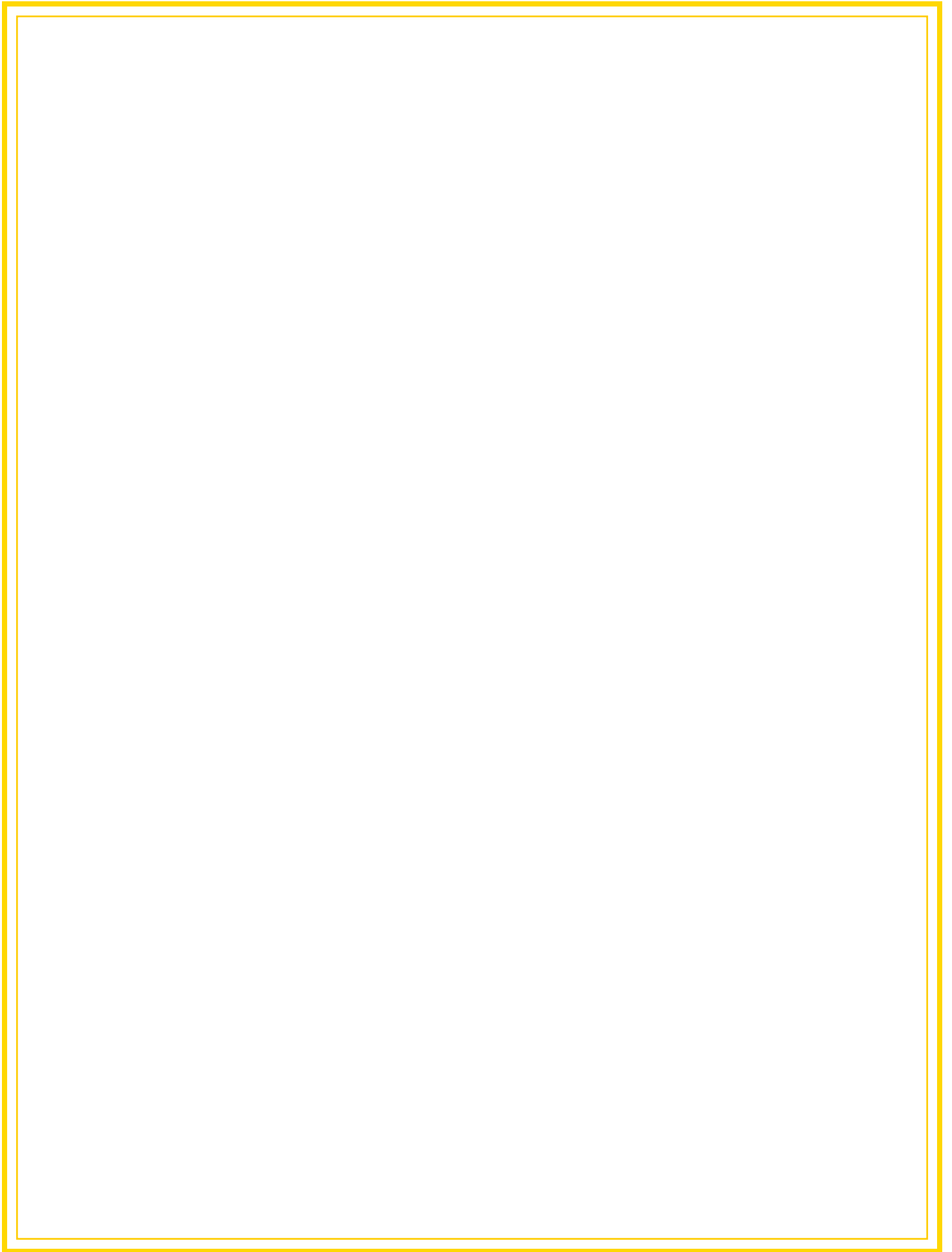
⁵⁶ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 15.1 (= TH 1a, dated from 207–12 CE). On the dating of the Hermetica see further Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes* 11; van den Kerchove, *Voie*, 5–6.

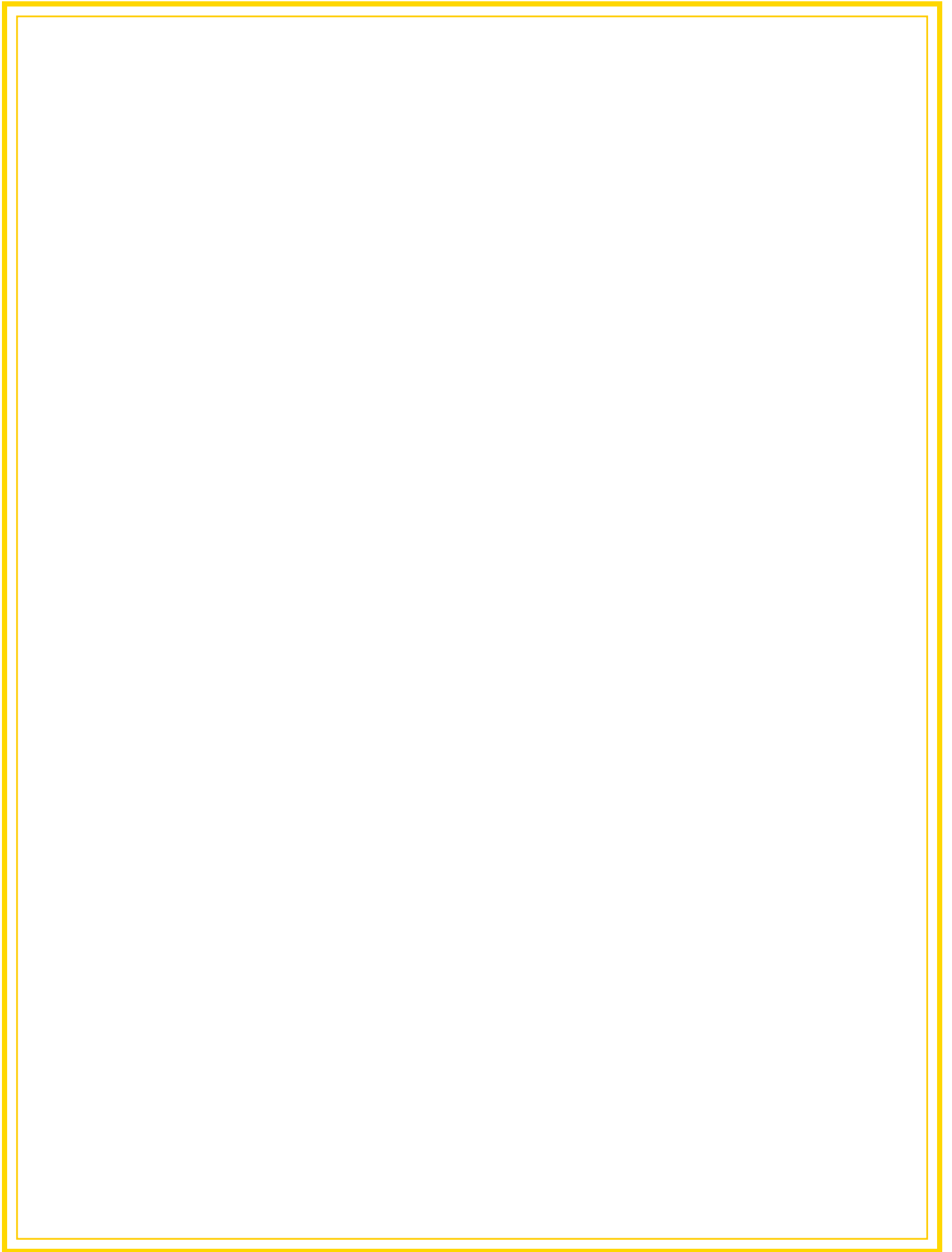
⁵⁷ Lucian, *The Dream, or the Cock* 18: “I [a man reincarnated as a rooster] went to Egypt to commune with the prophets in their wisdom. I even penetrated into their inner sanctuaries and fully learned the books of Horus and Isis.”

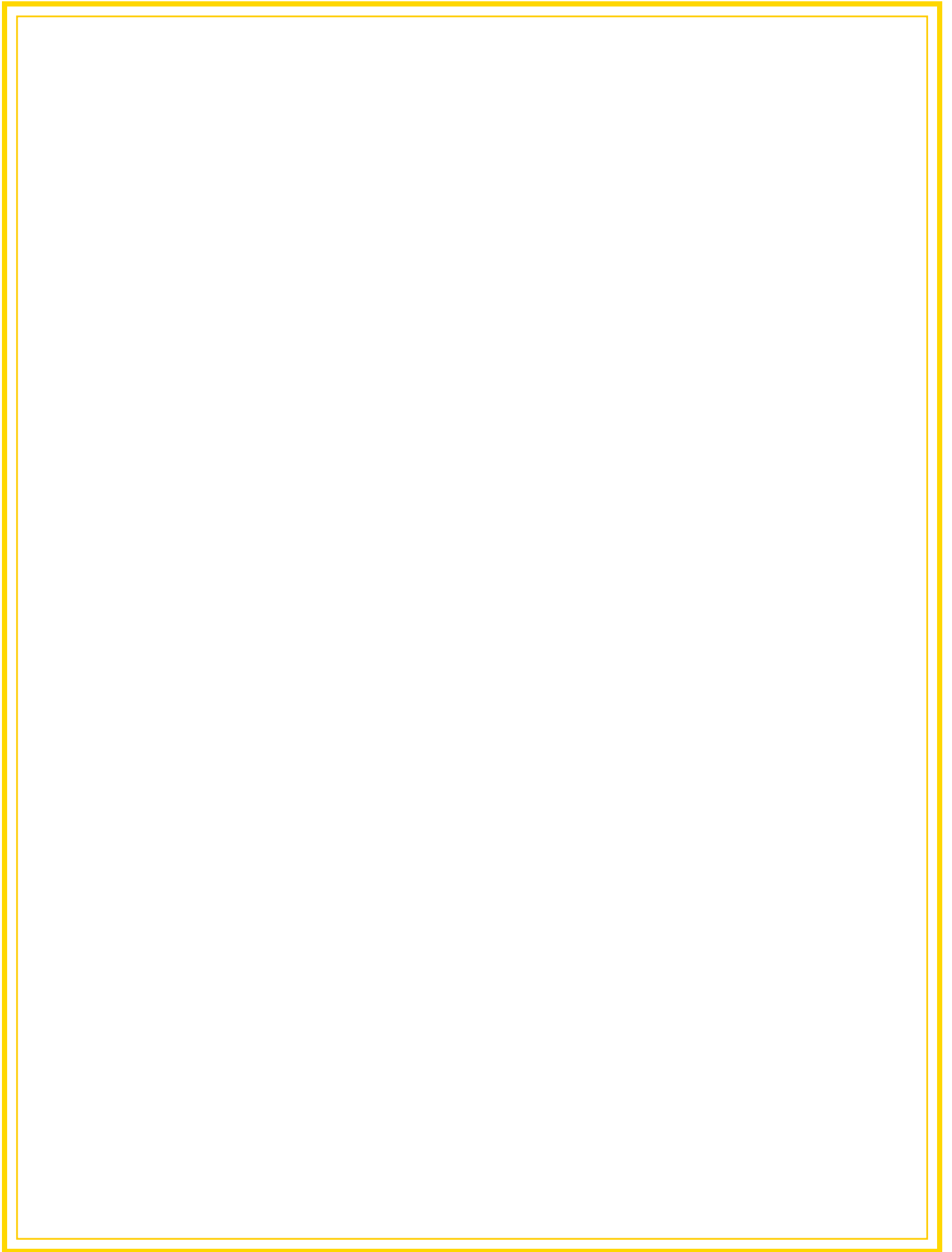
⁵⁸ Scott, *Hermetica*, 3.474–75.

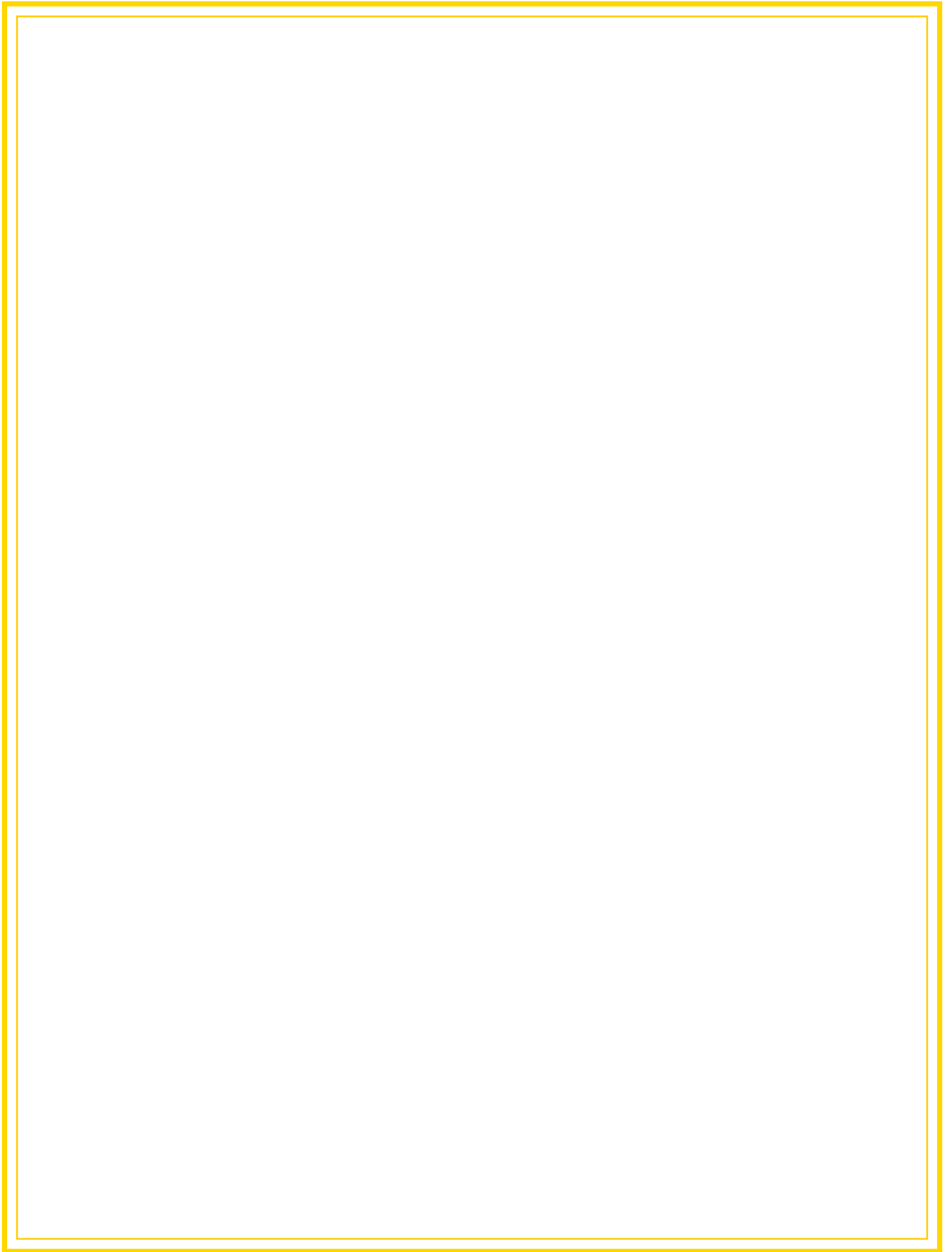
⁵⁹ Quoting A. D. Nock, “Diatribic Form in the *Hermetica*,” in Zeph Stewart, ed., *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1.26–32 at 31. Nock refers to Eduard Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 66, n.1 where Norden demonstrates Meyer’s law in a lengthy passage from the *Korē Kosmou*.

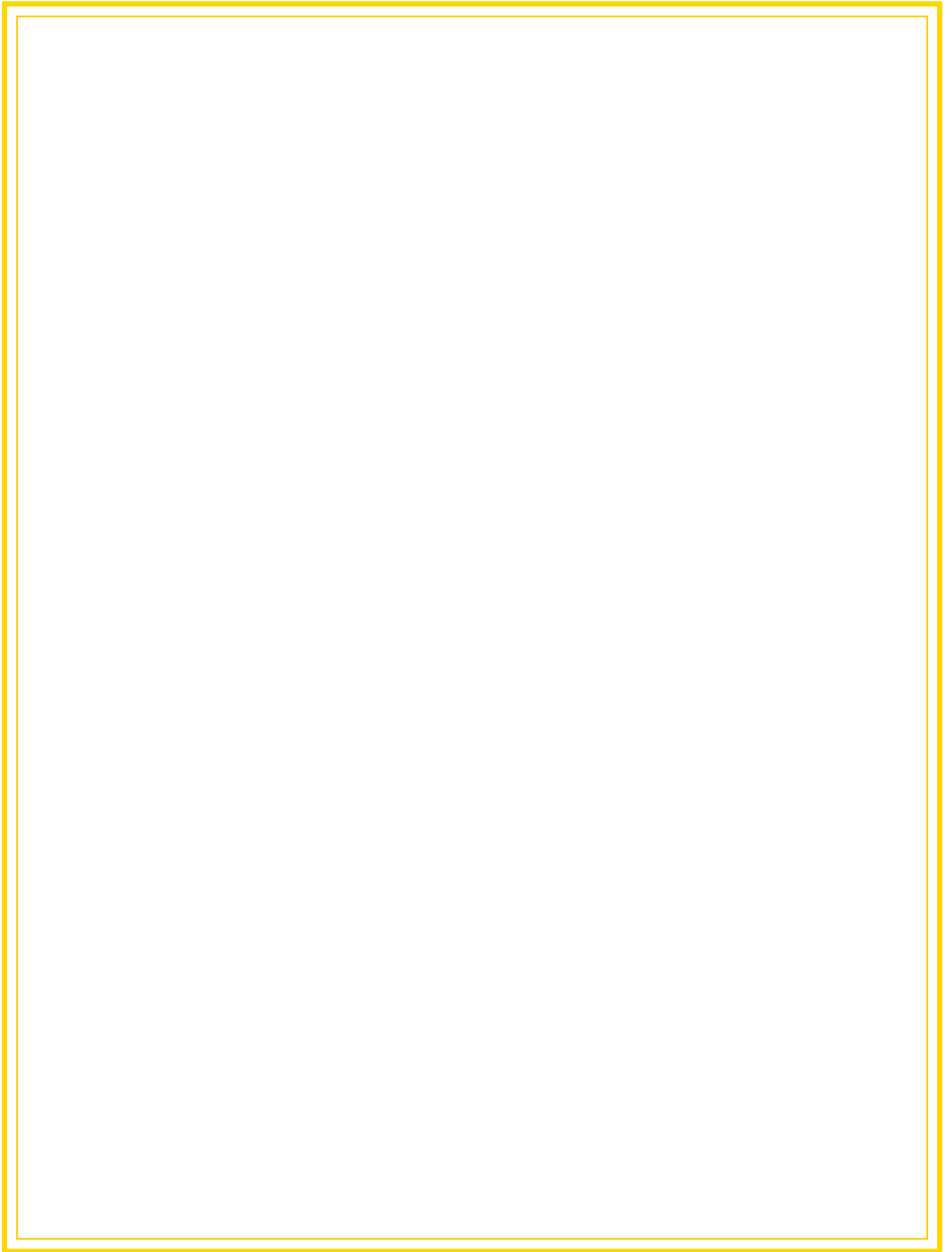


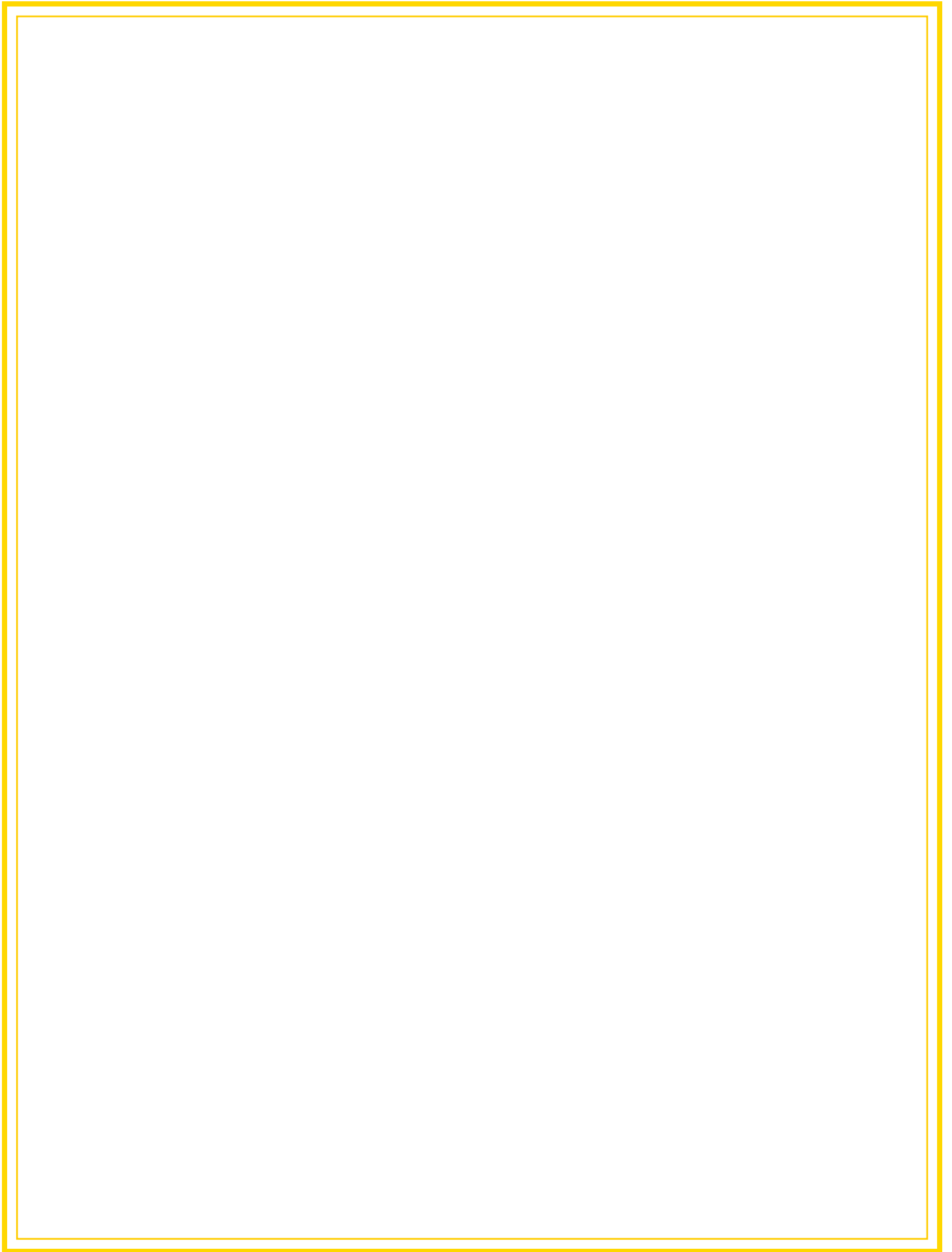


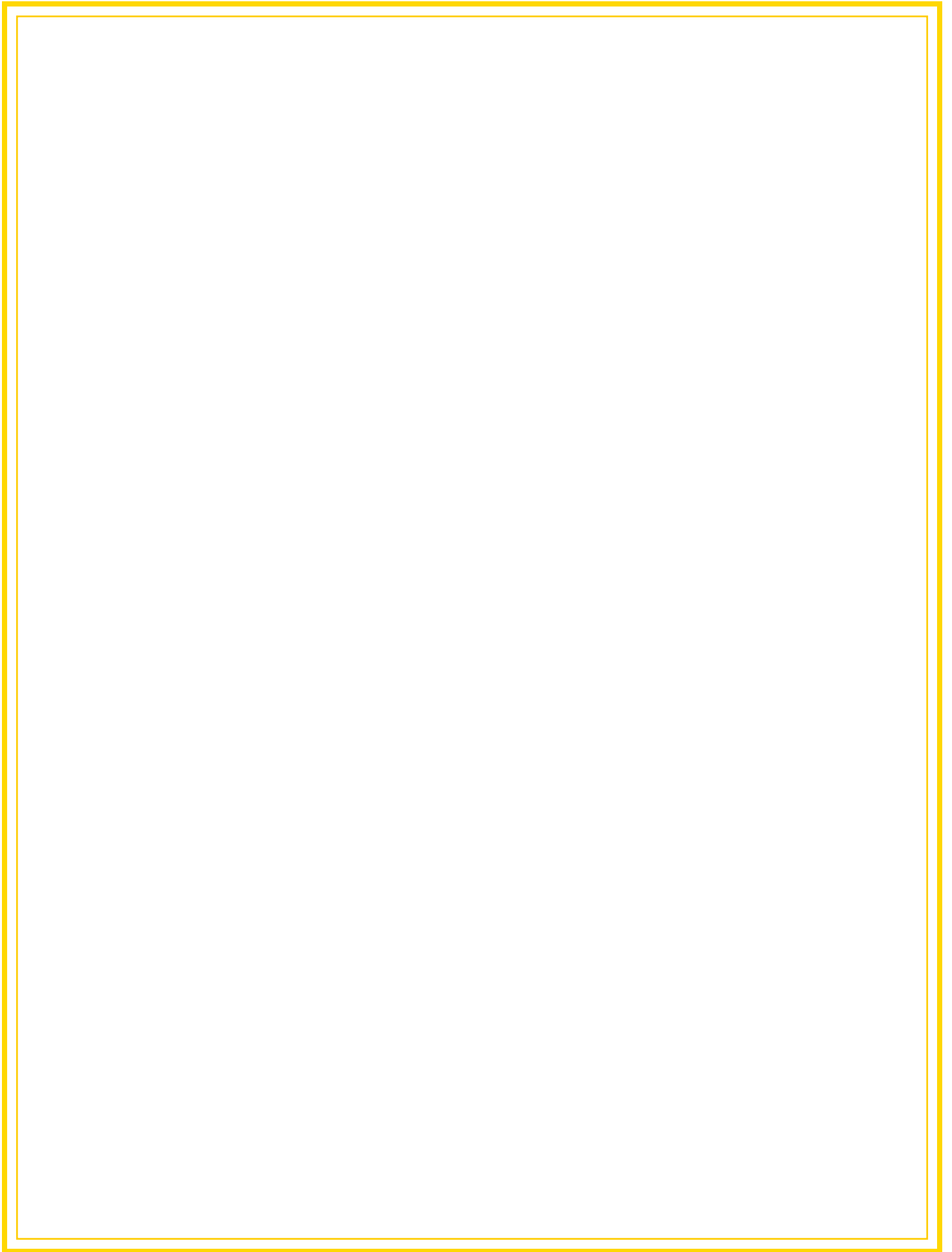


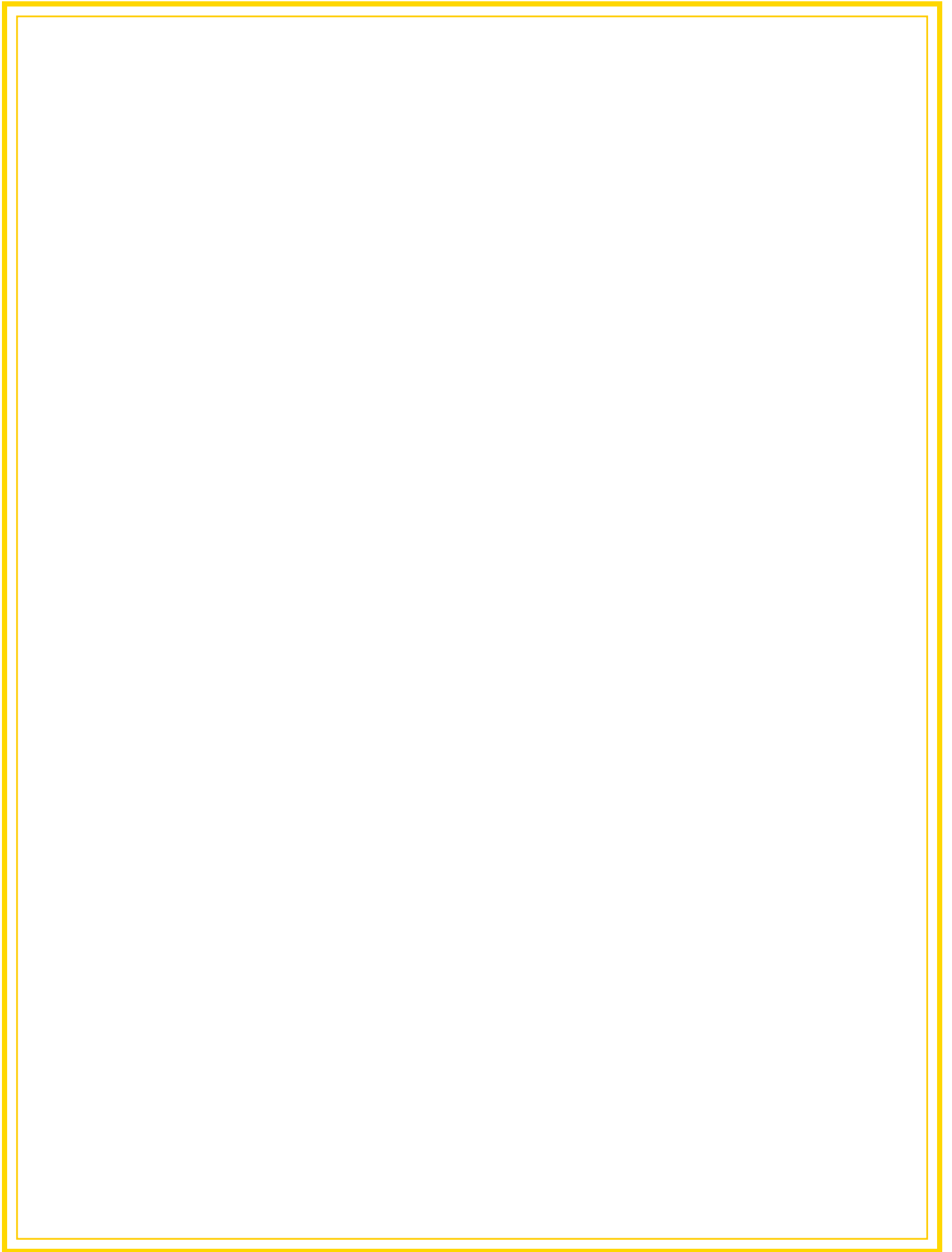


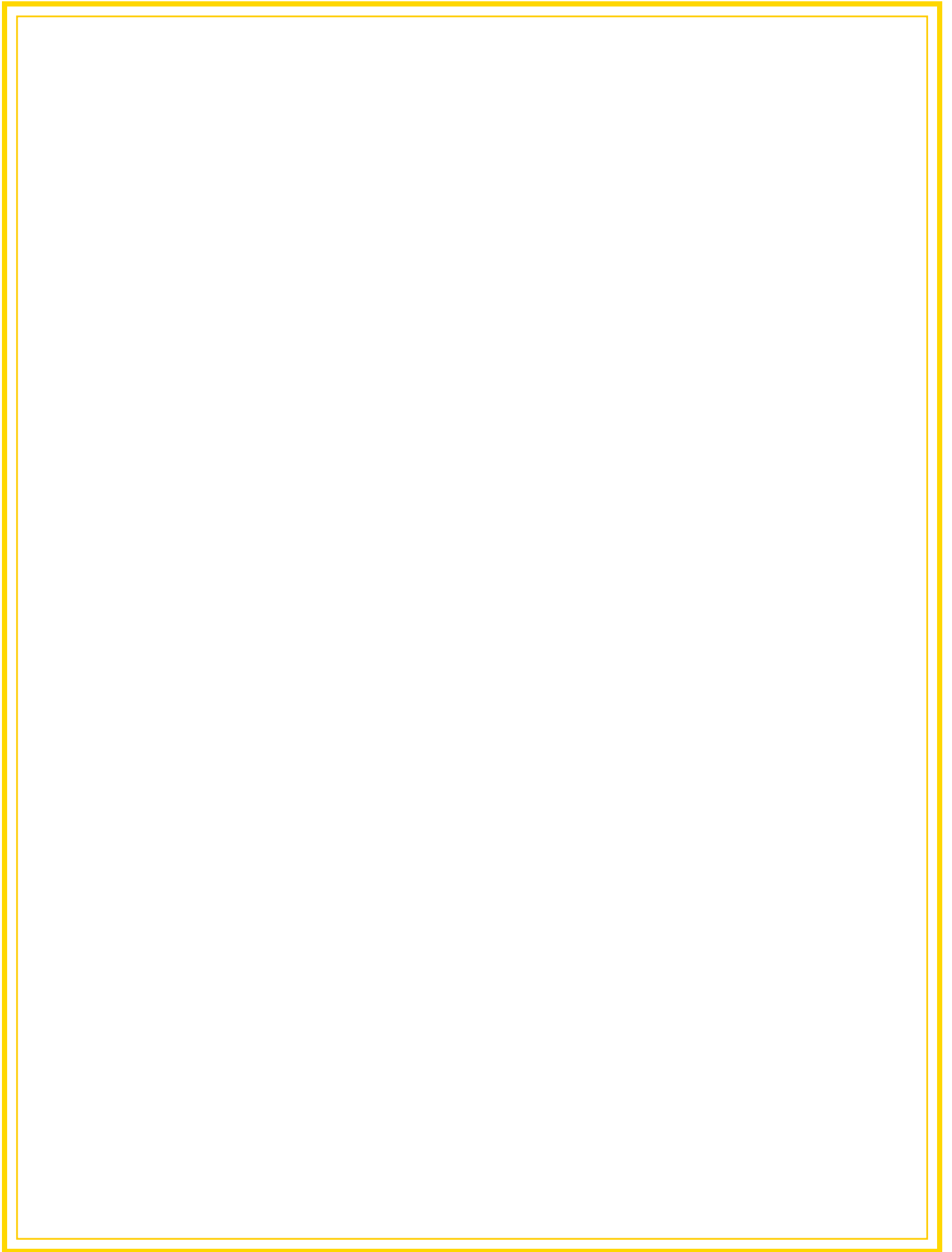


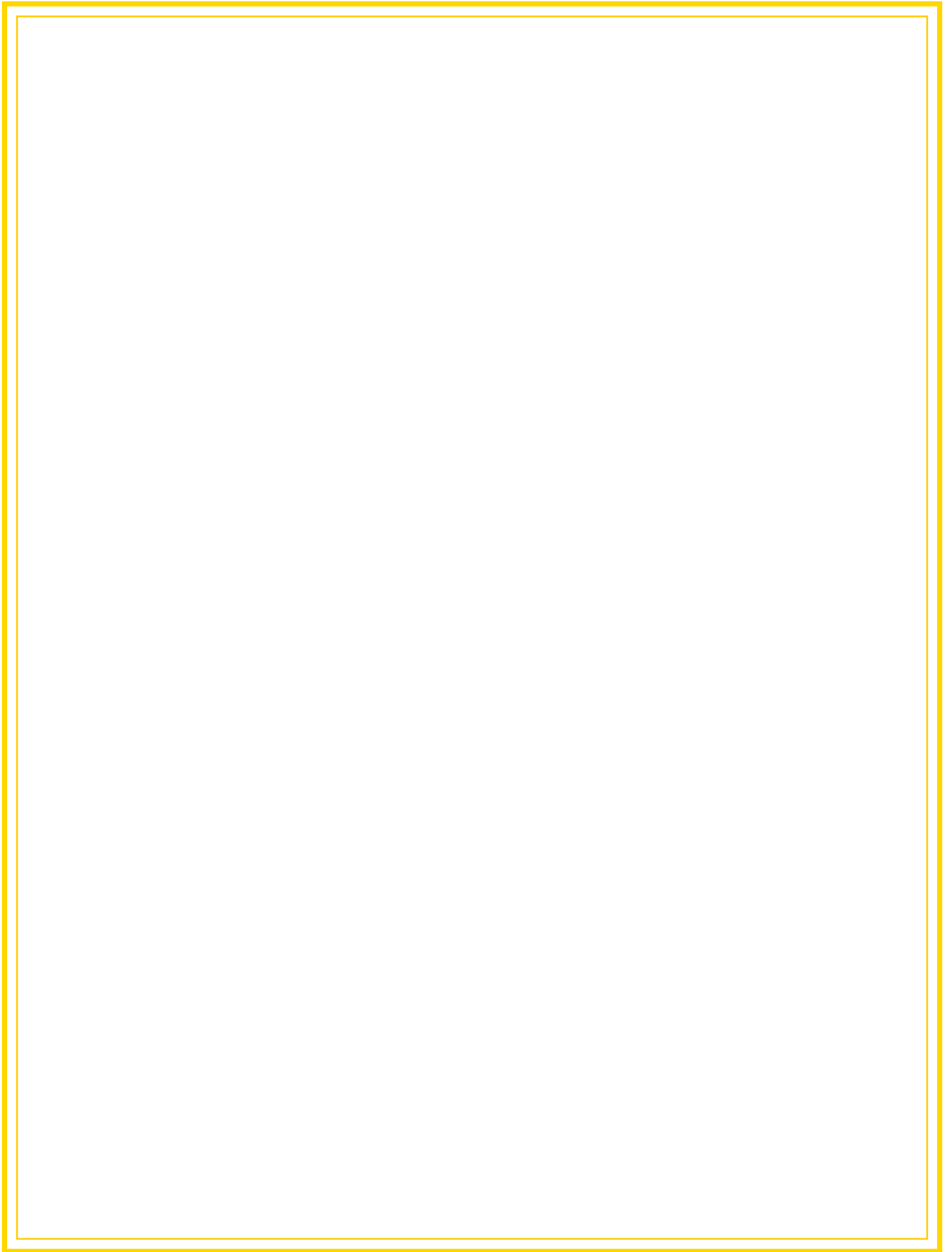


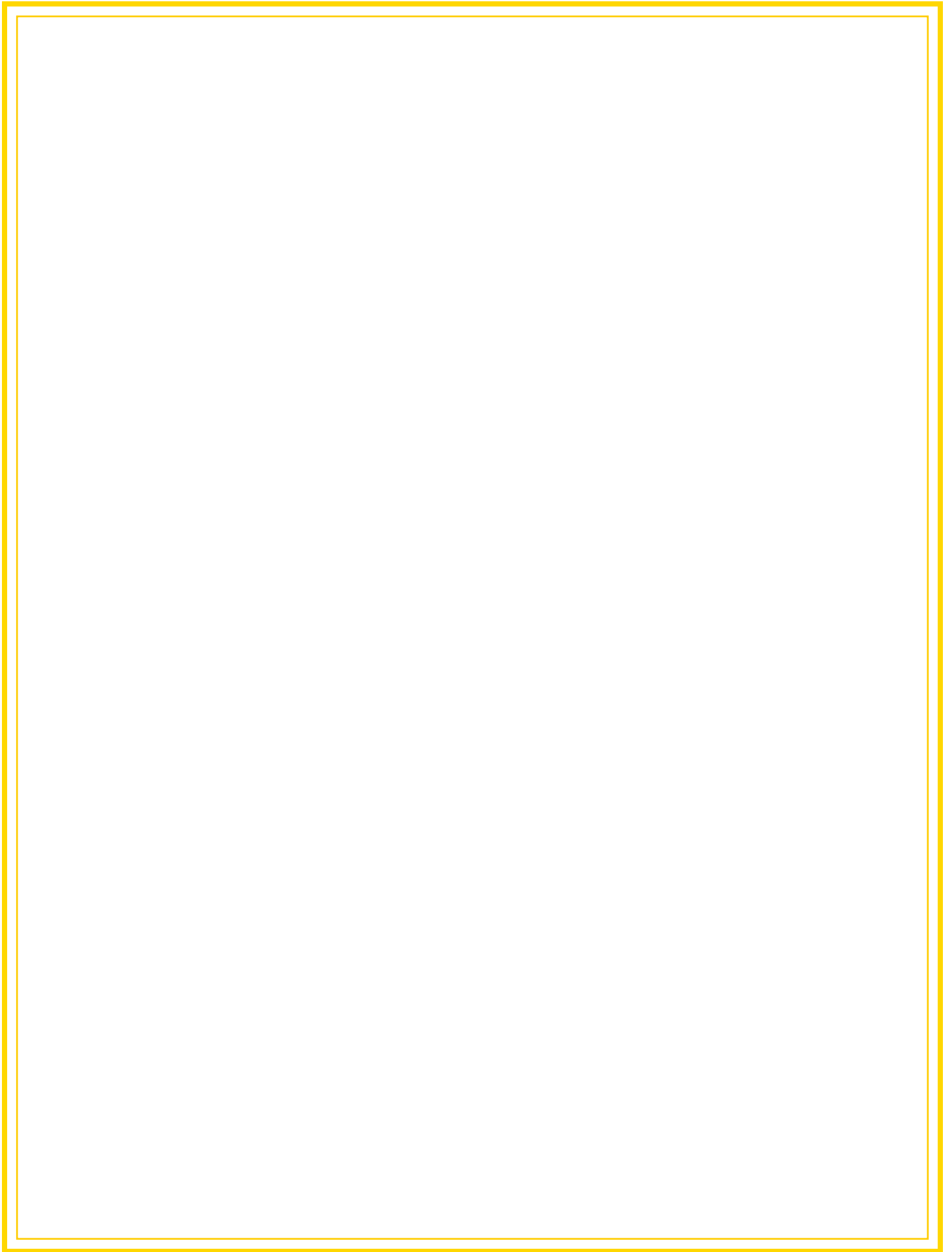


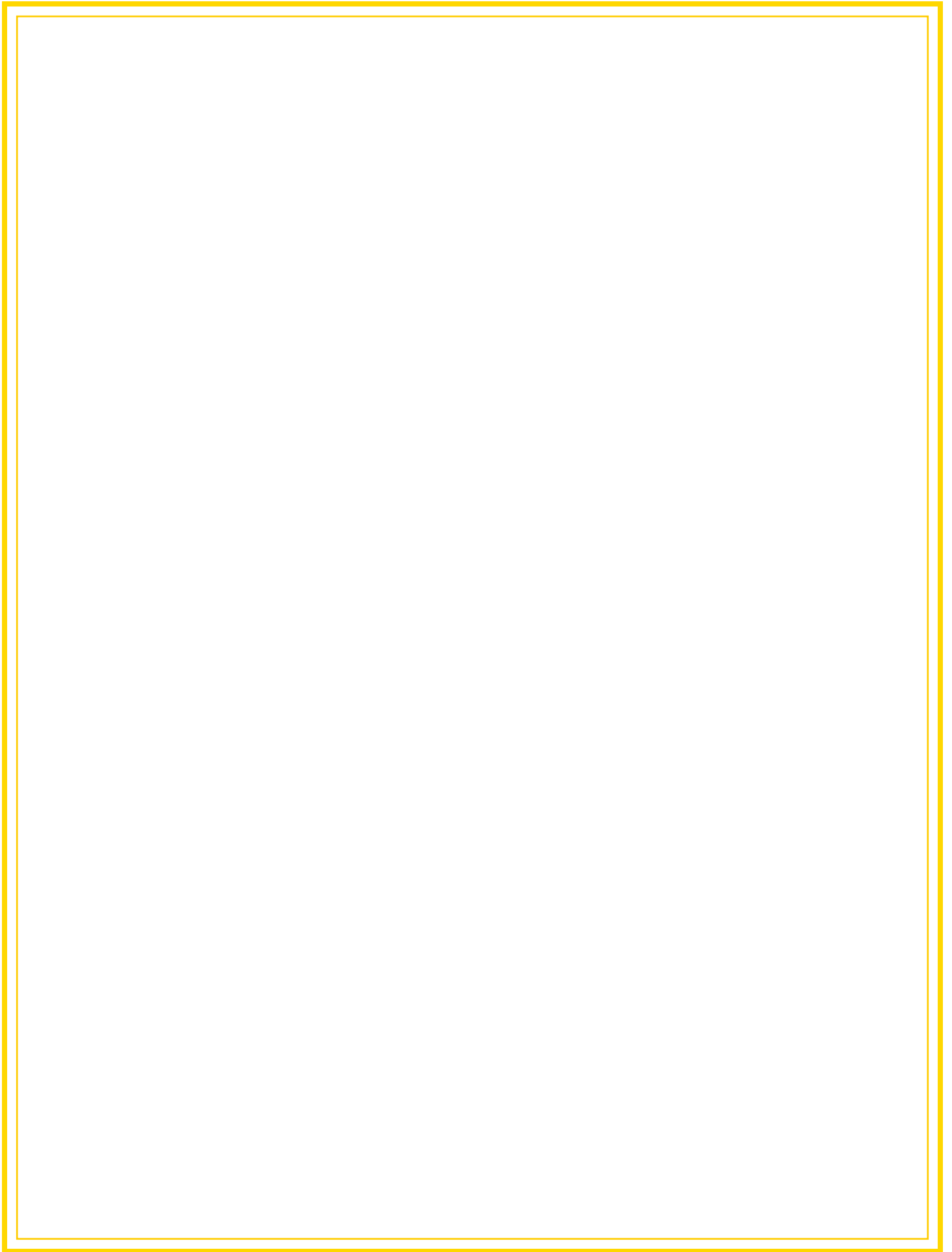


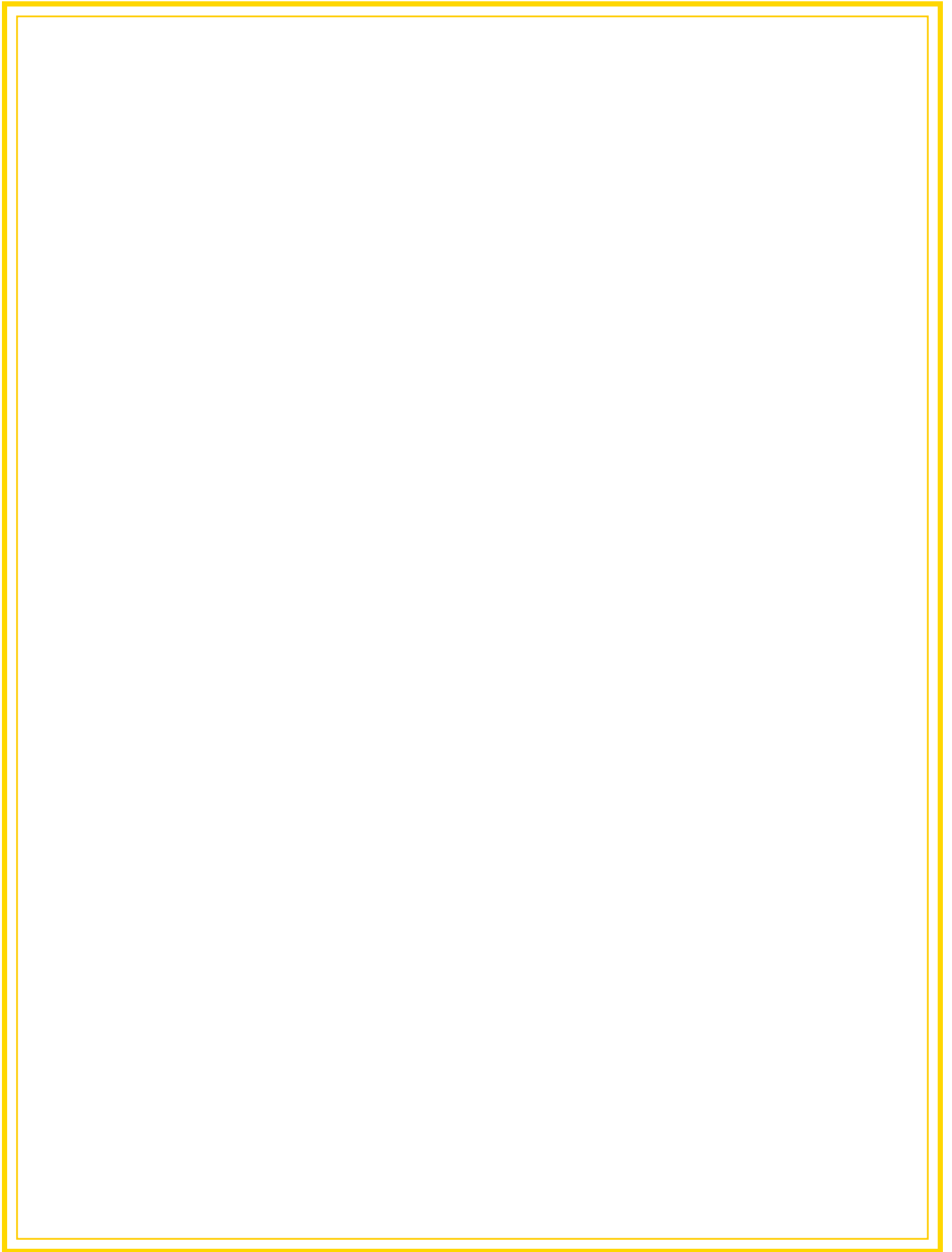


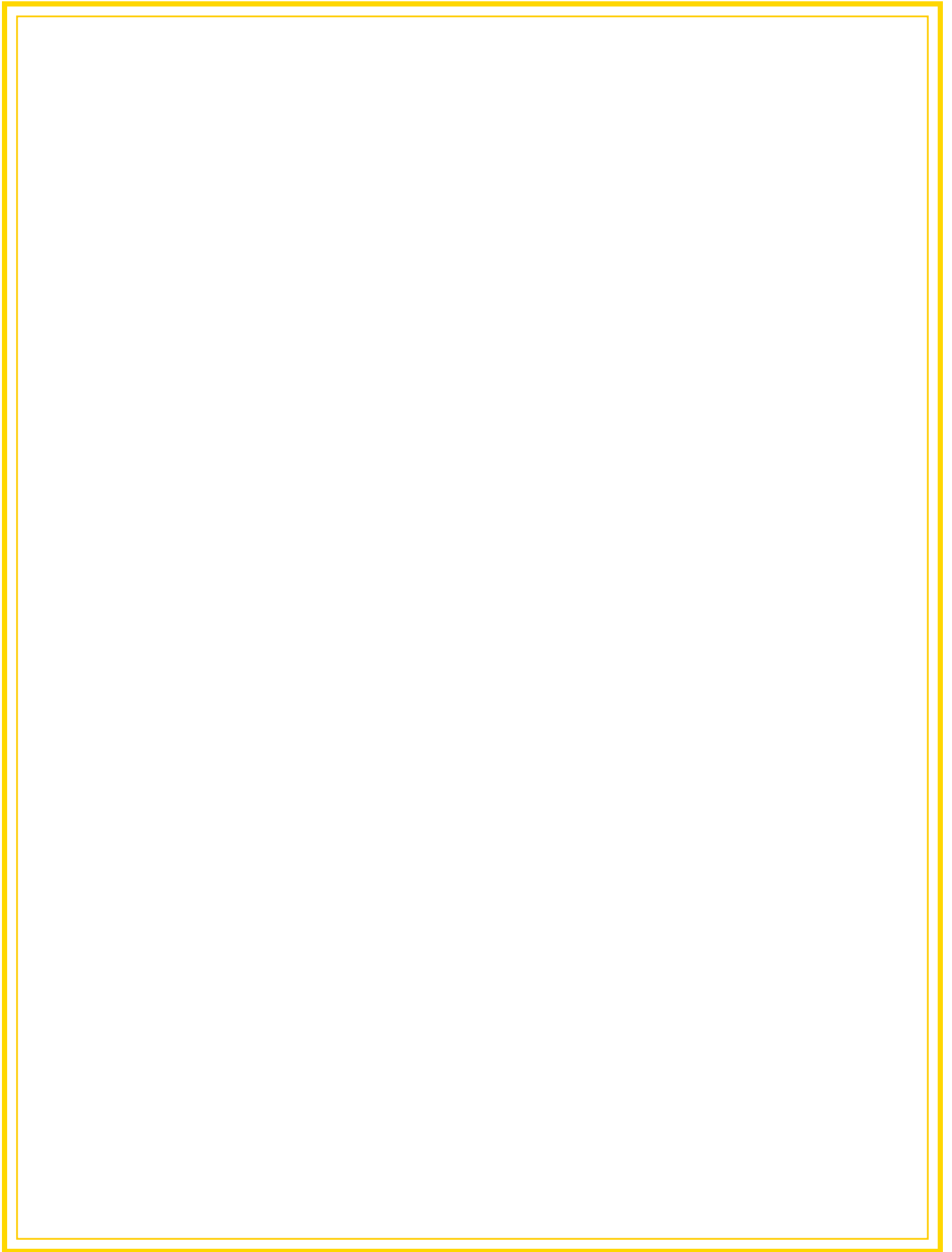


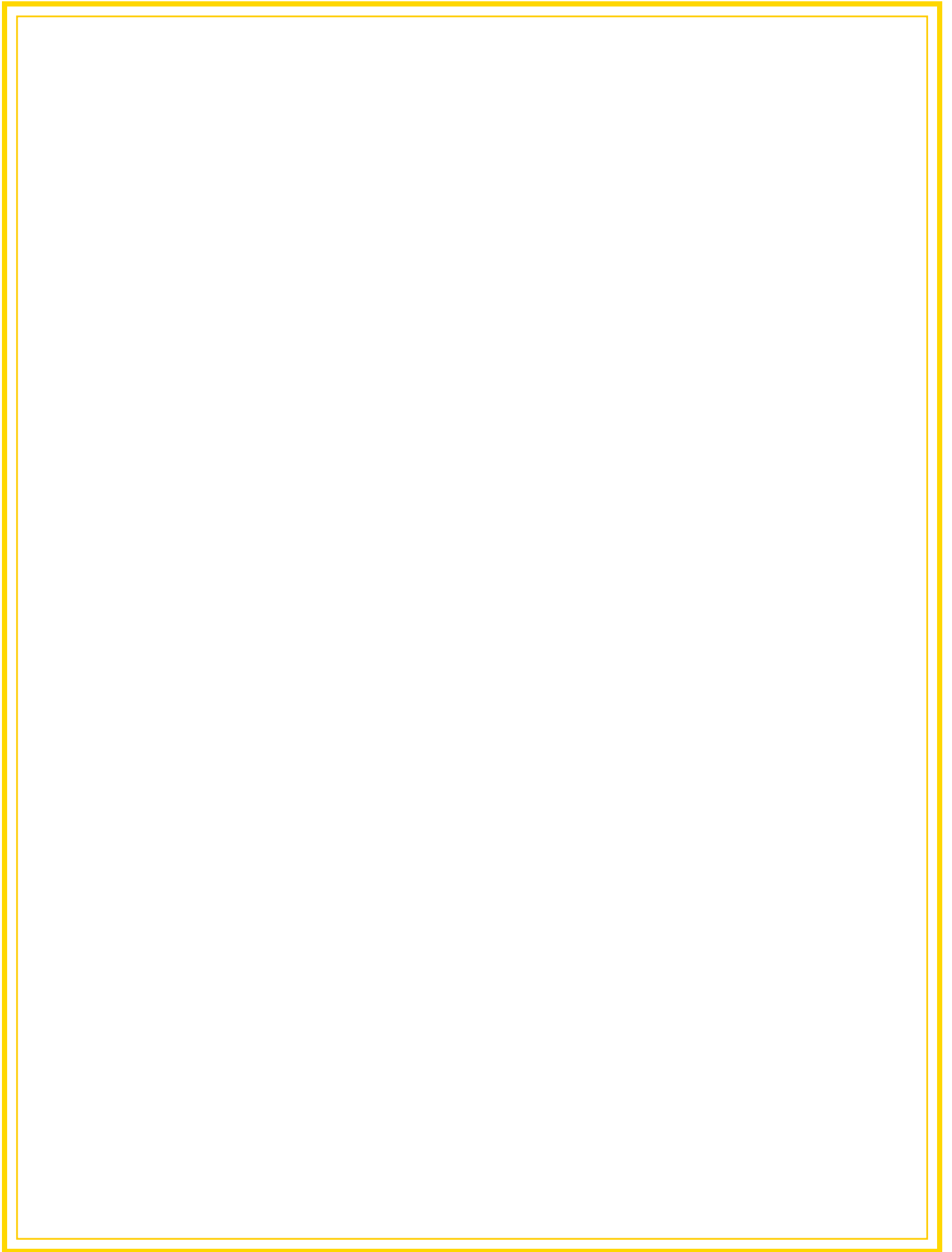


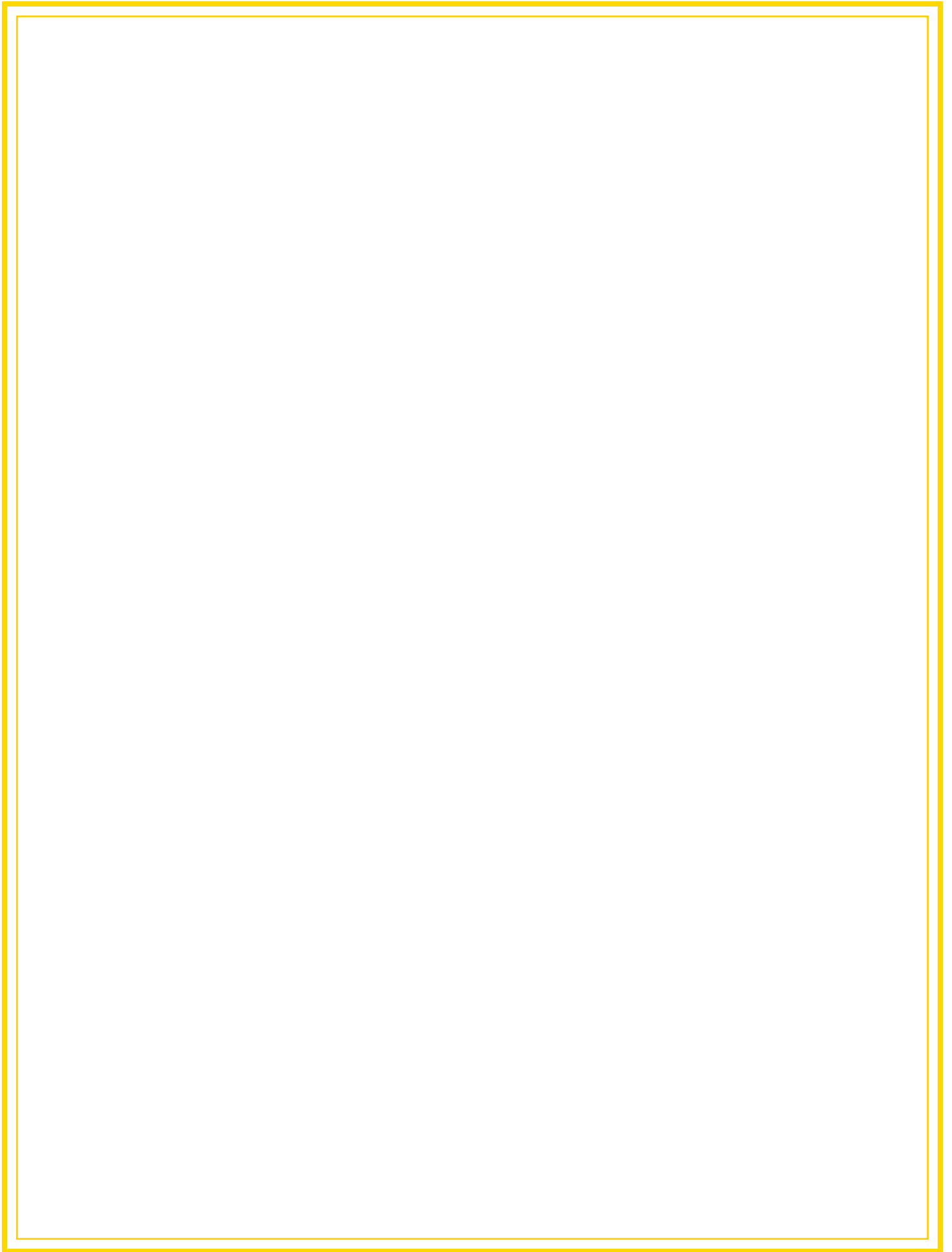


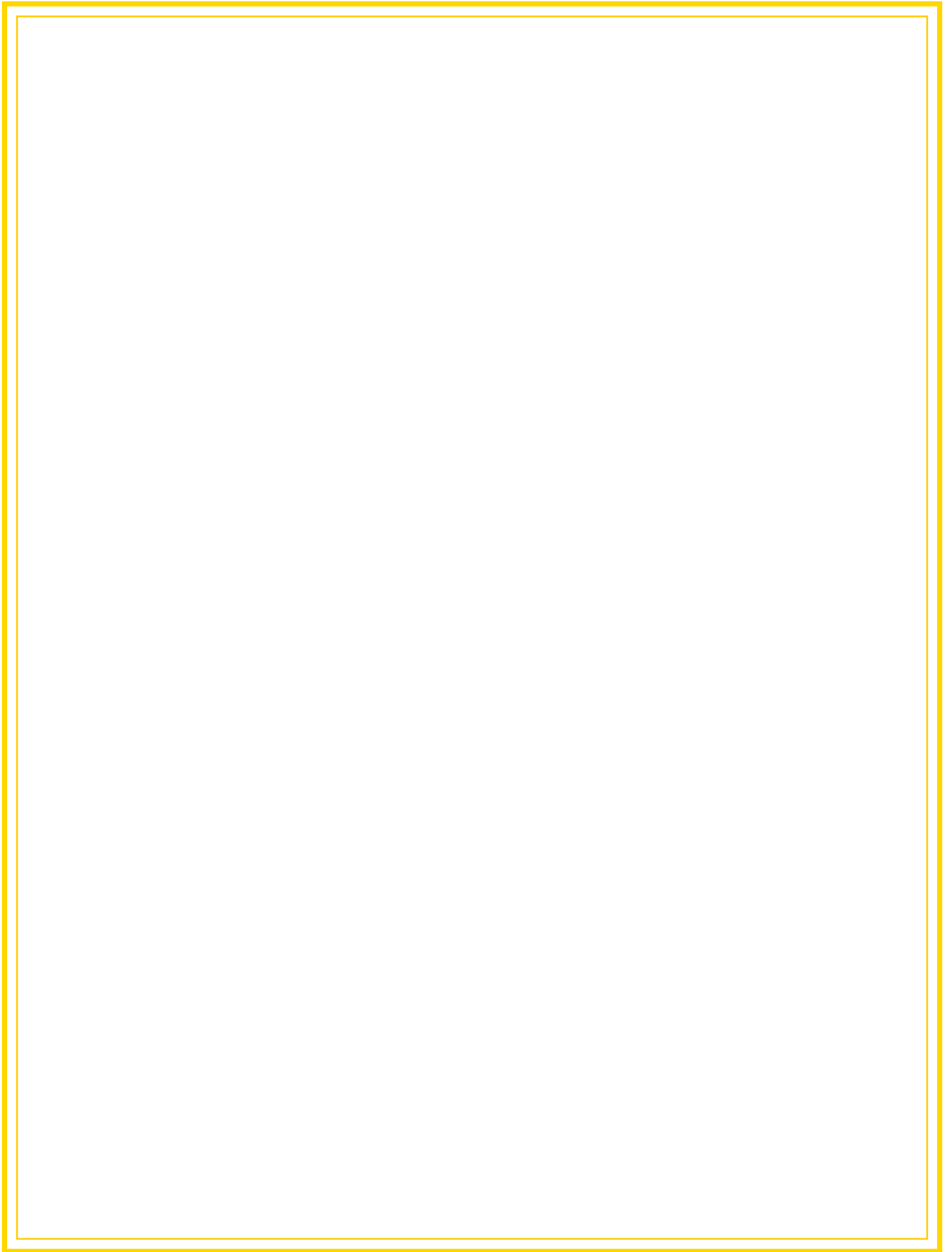


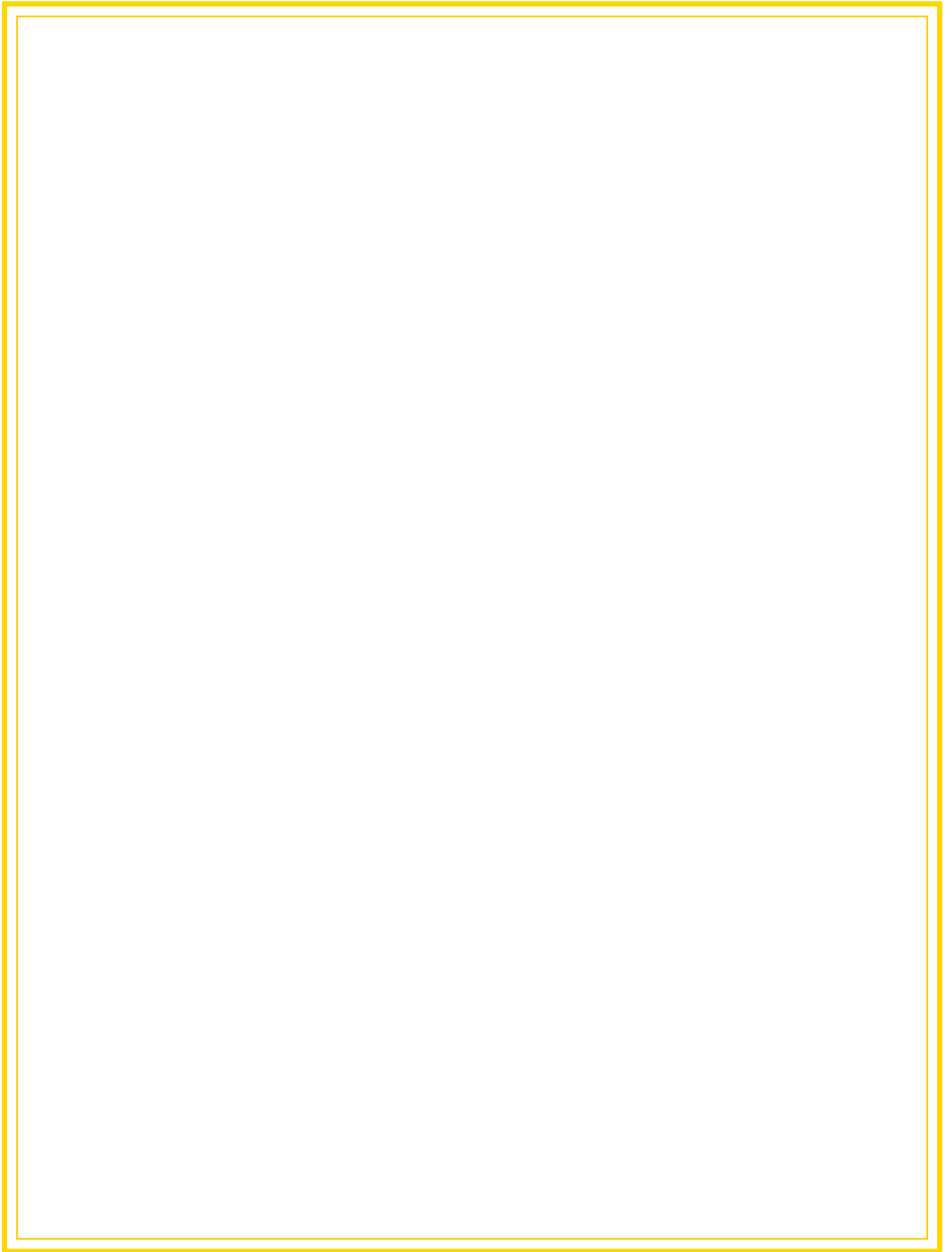


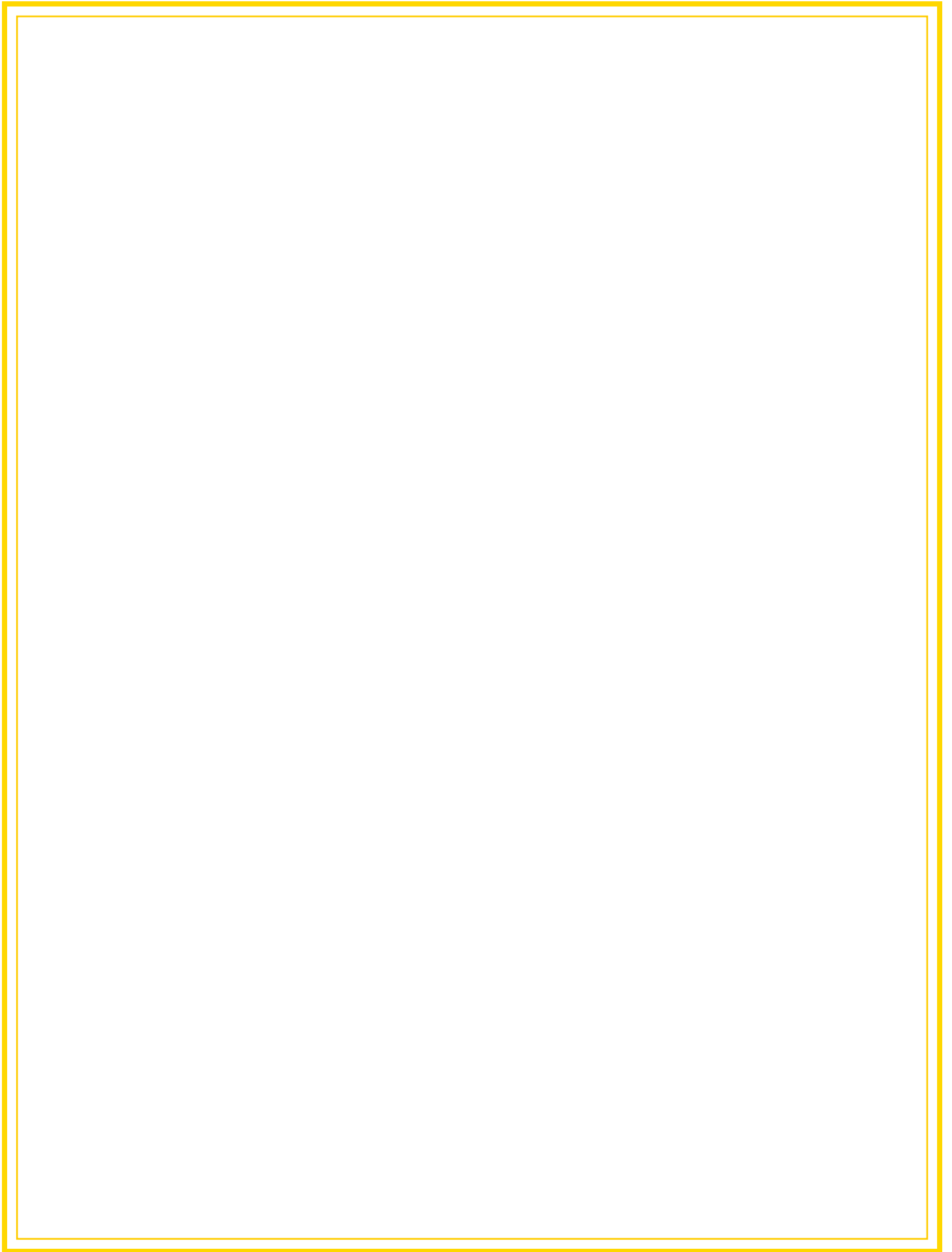


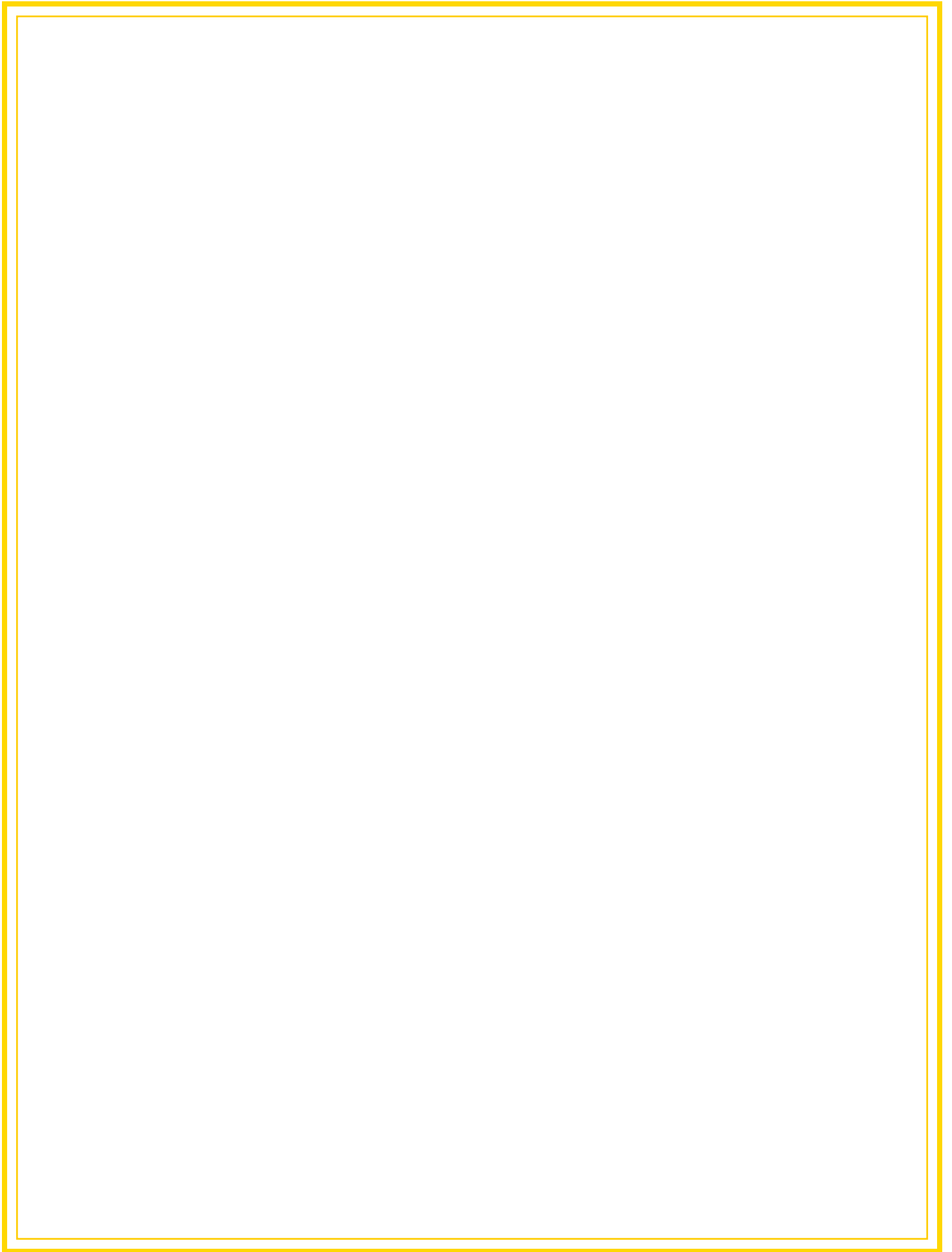


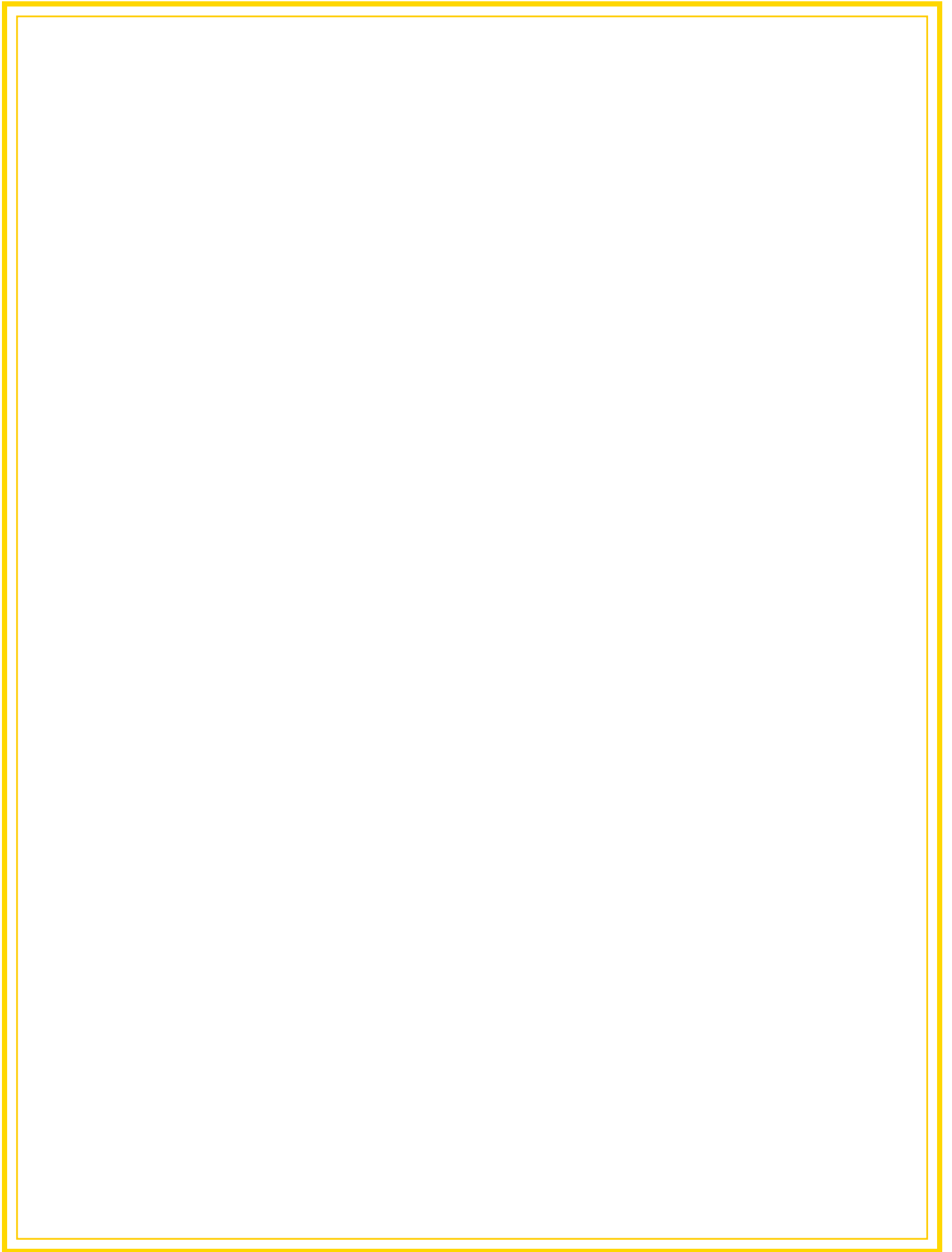


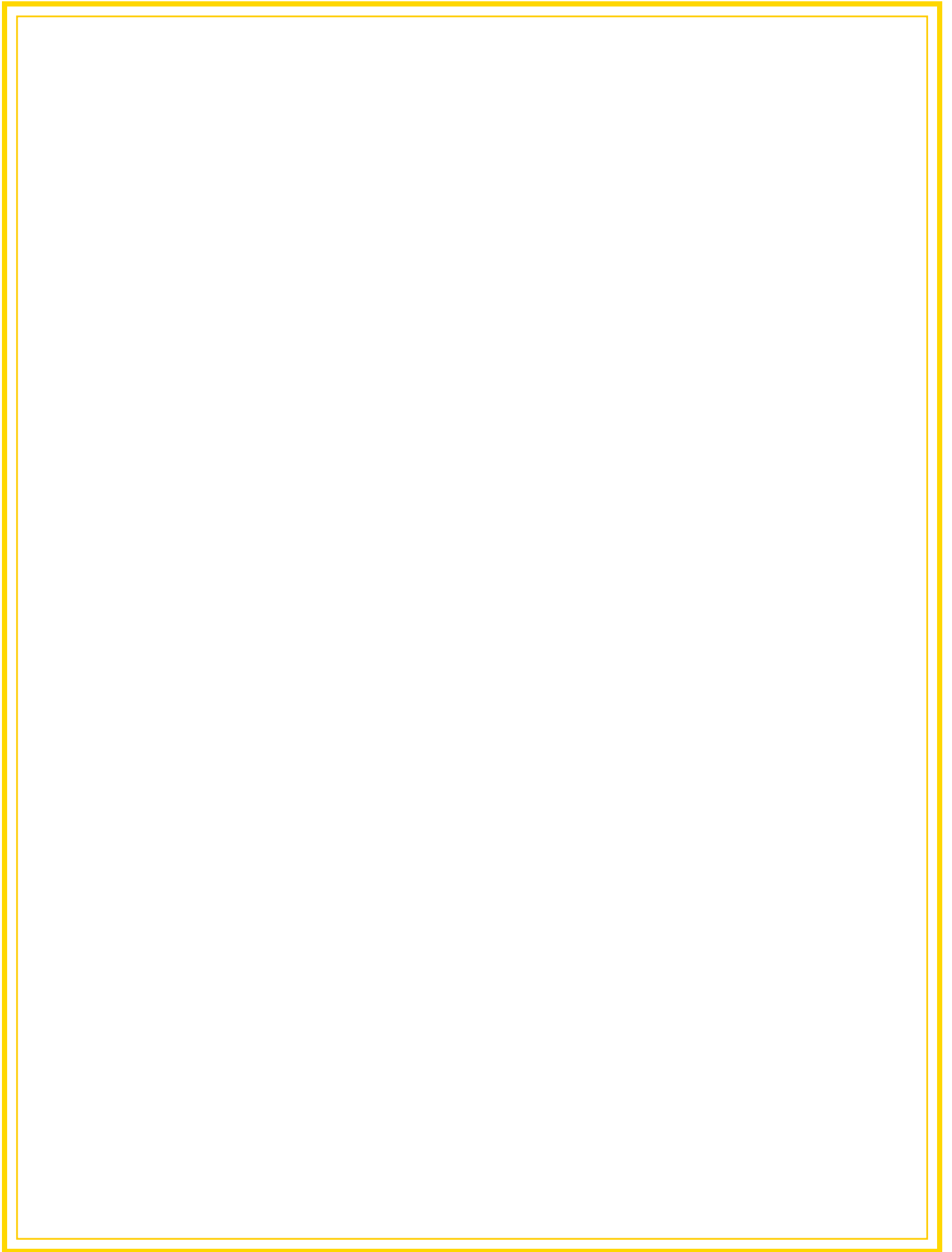


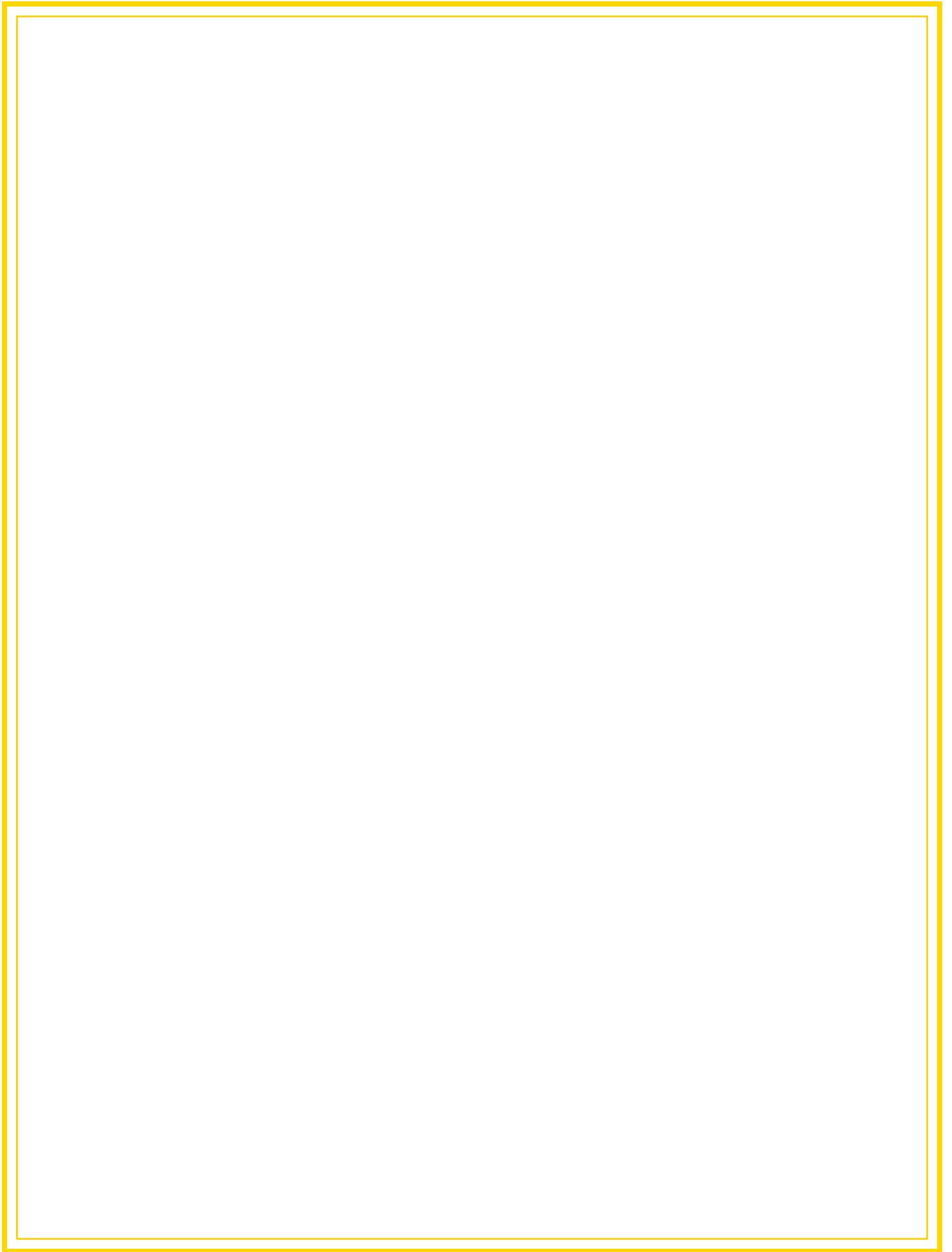


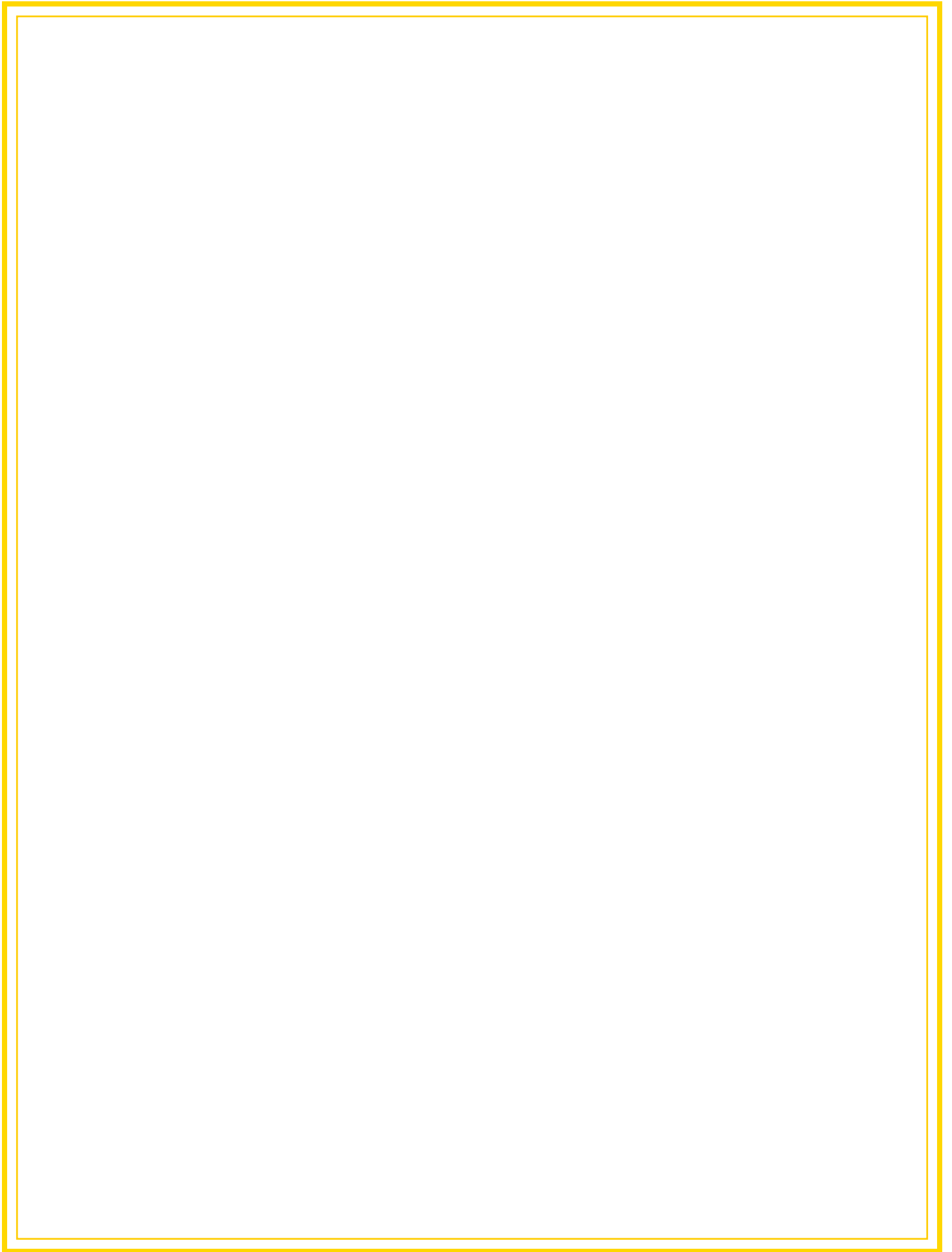


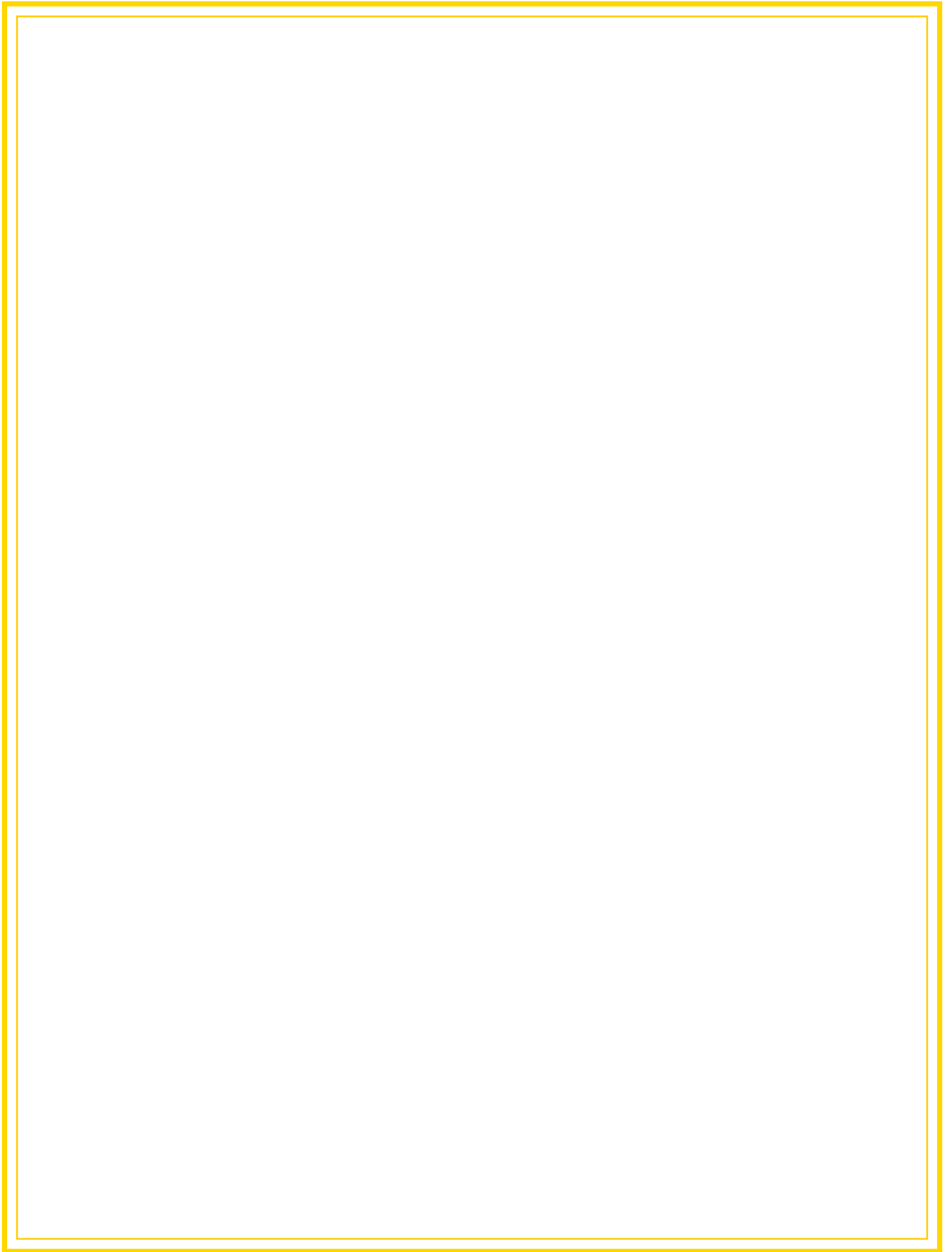


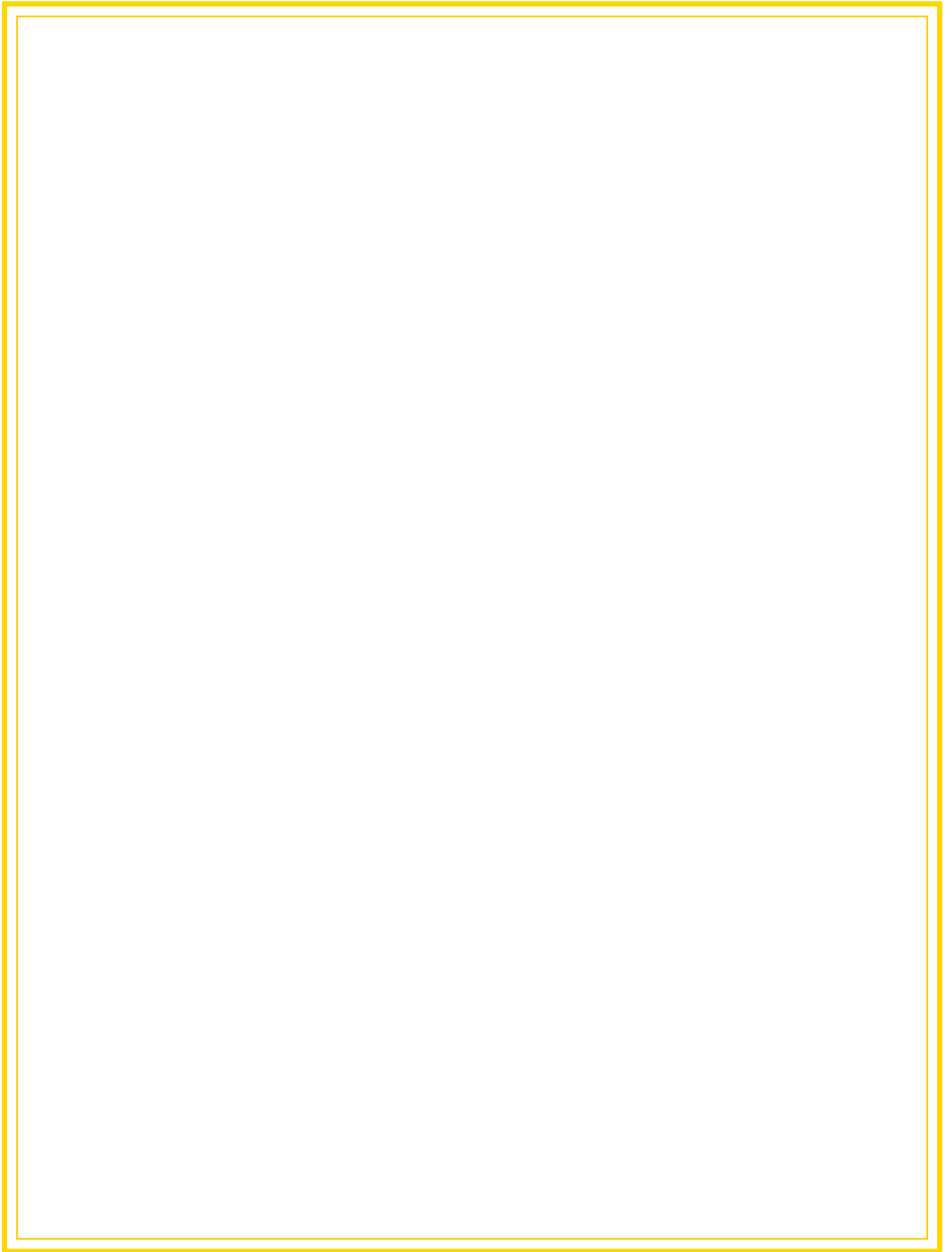


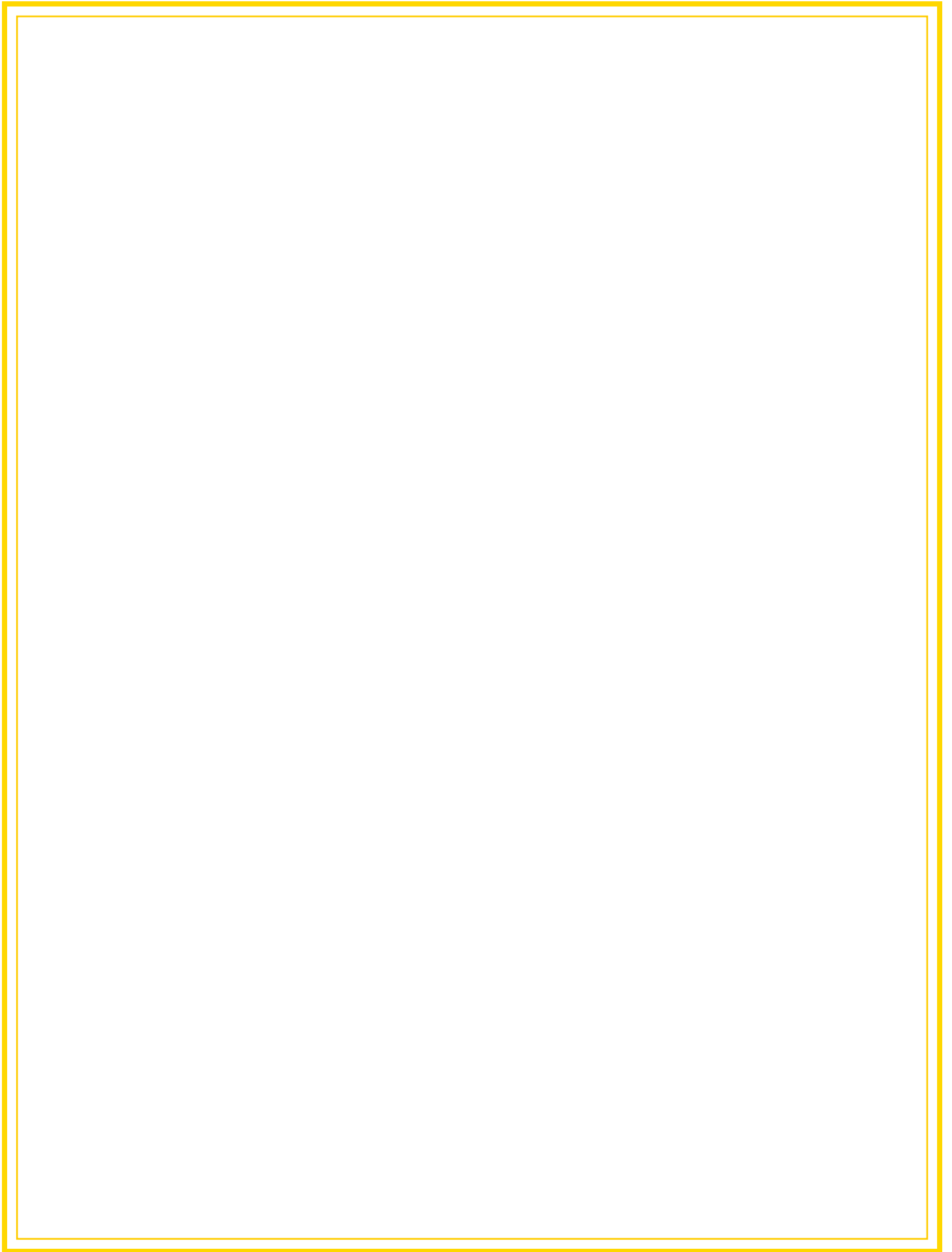


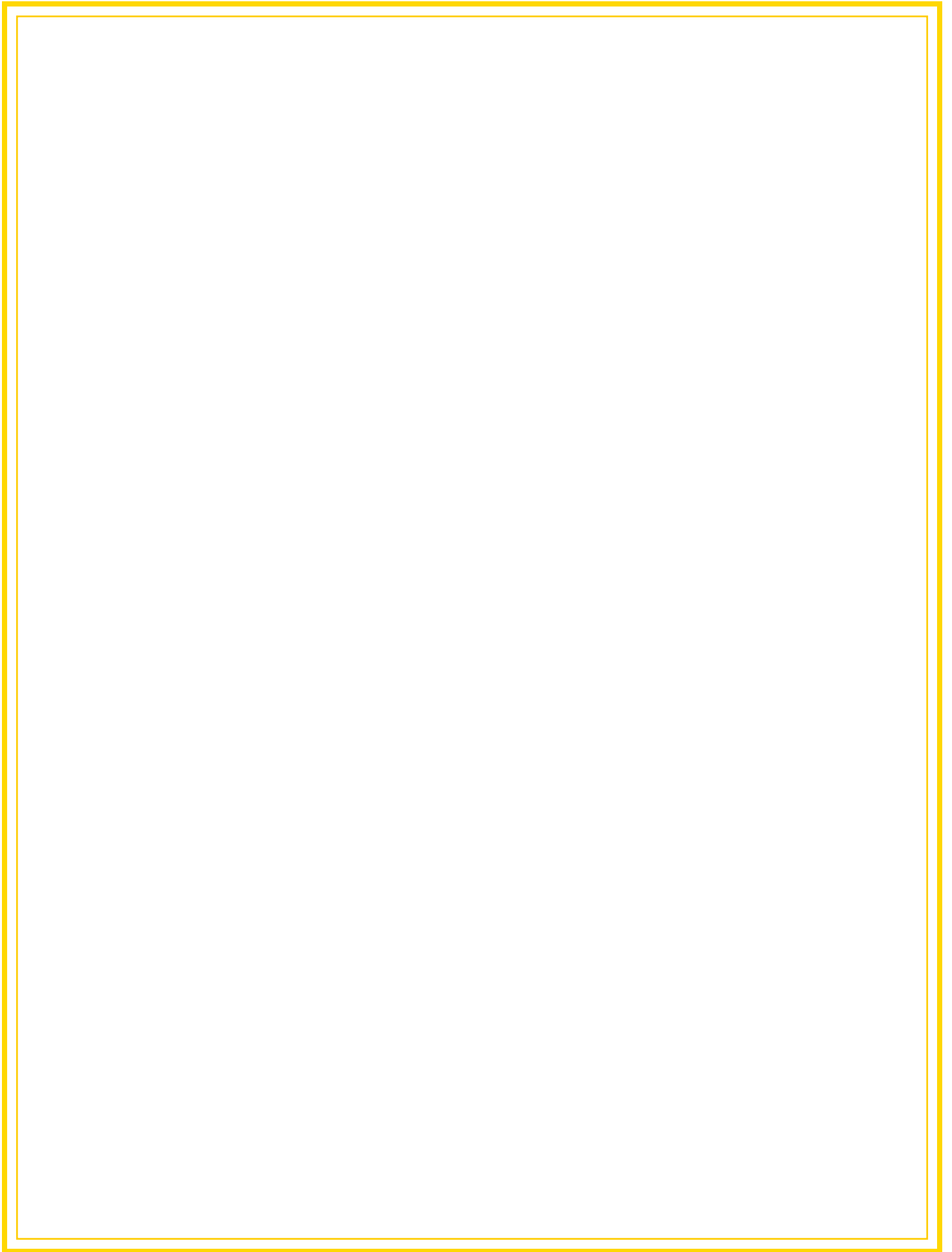


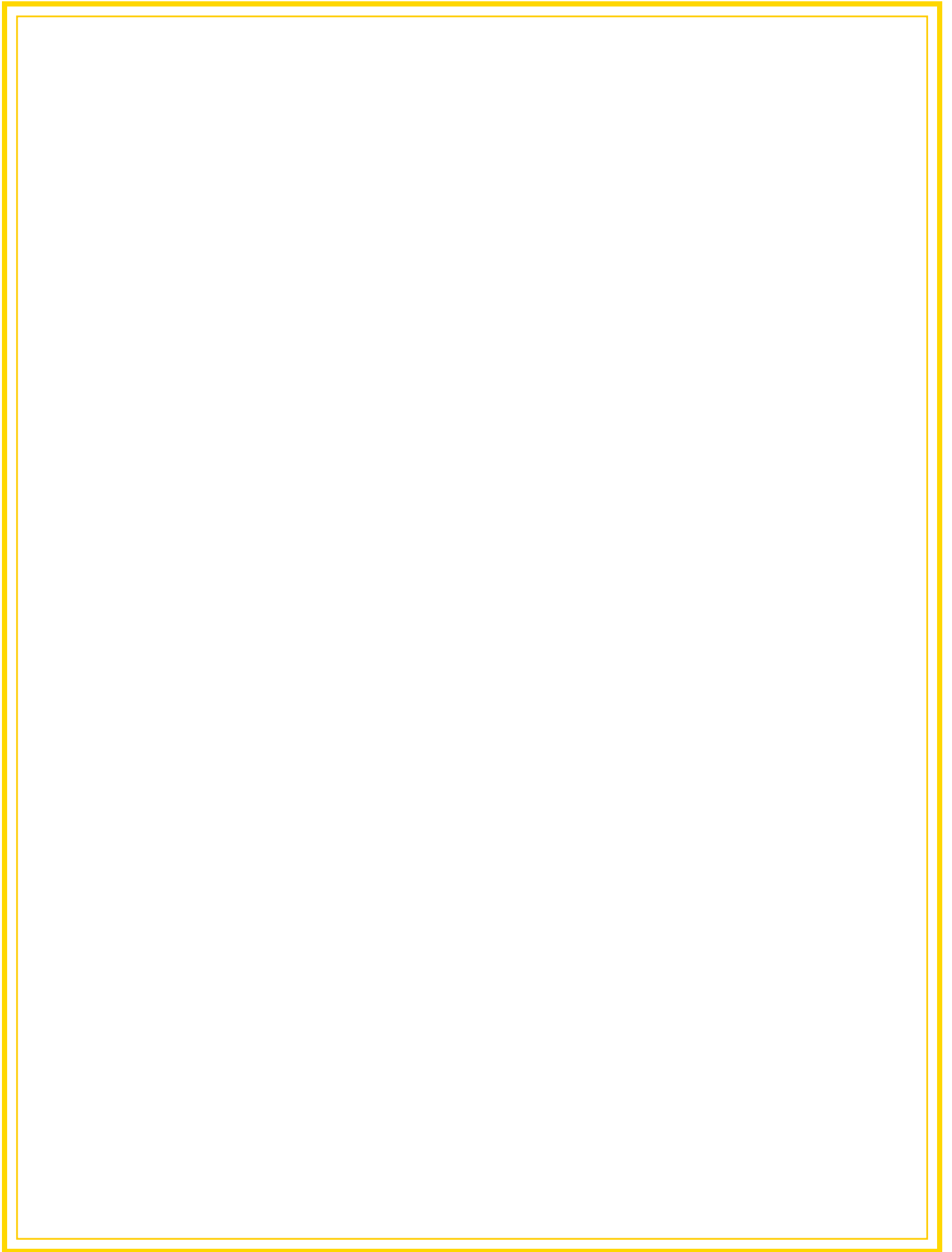


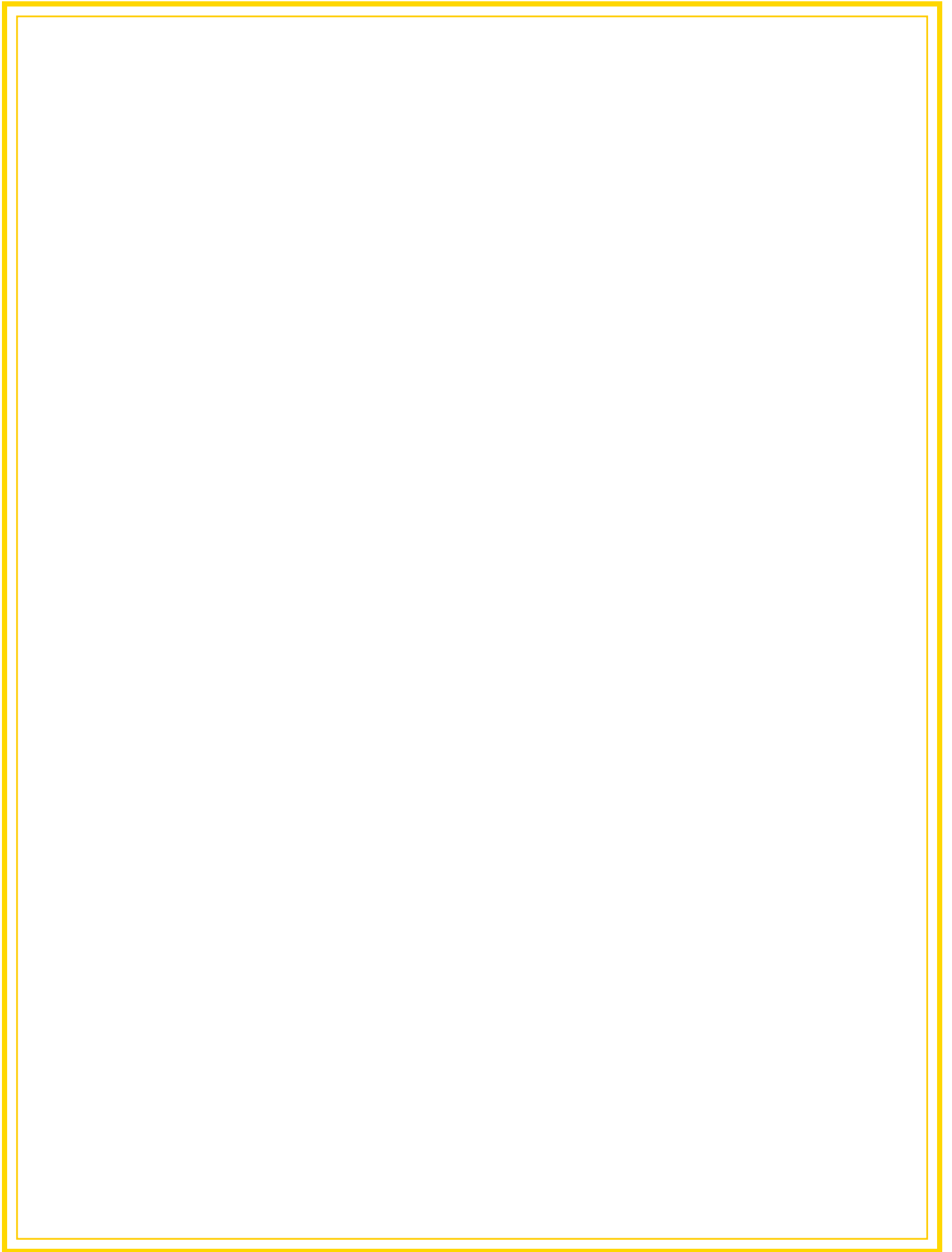


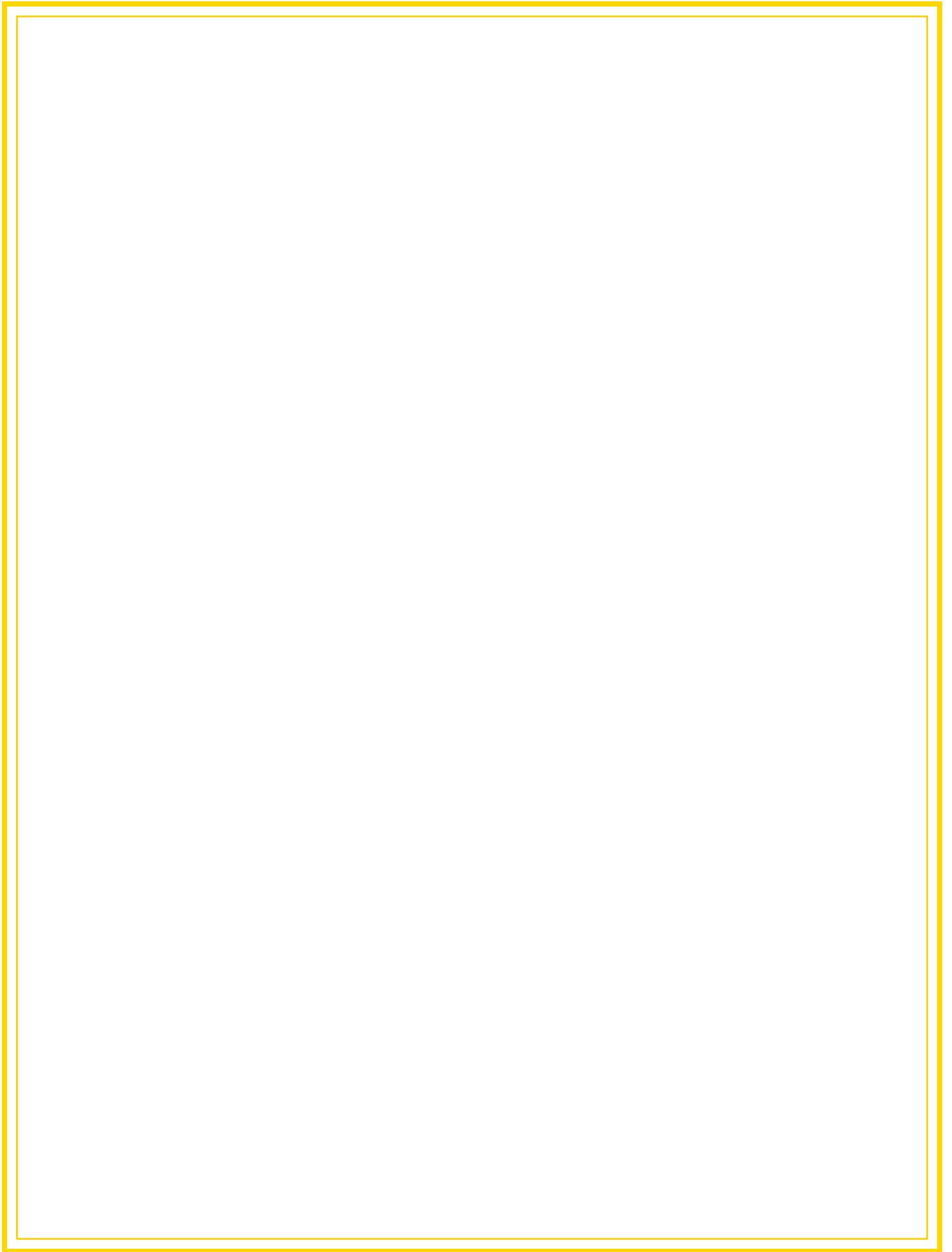


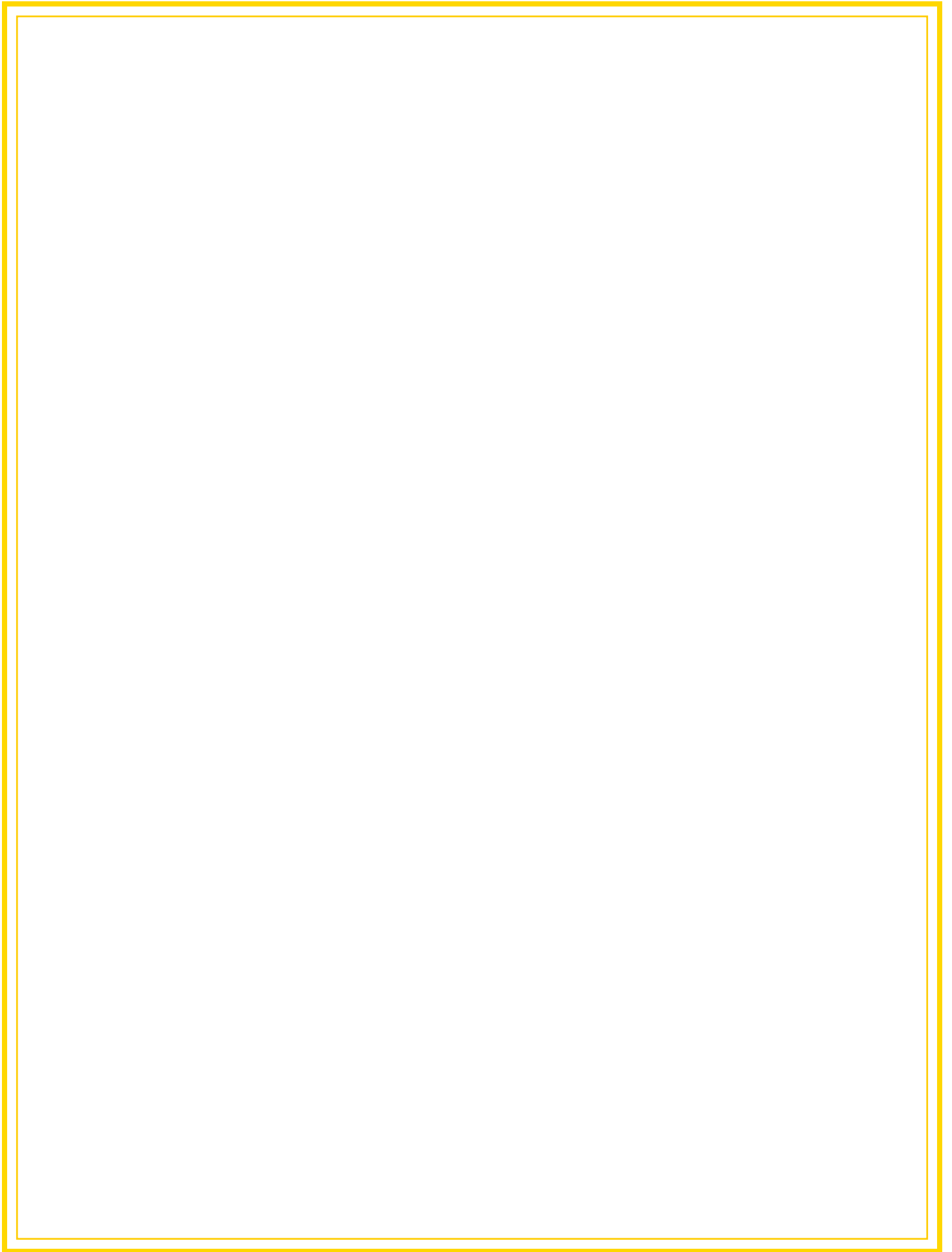


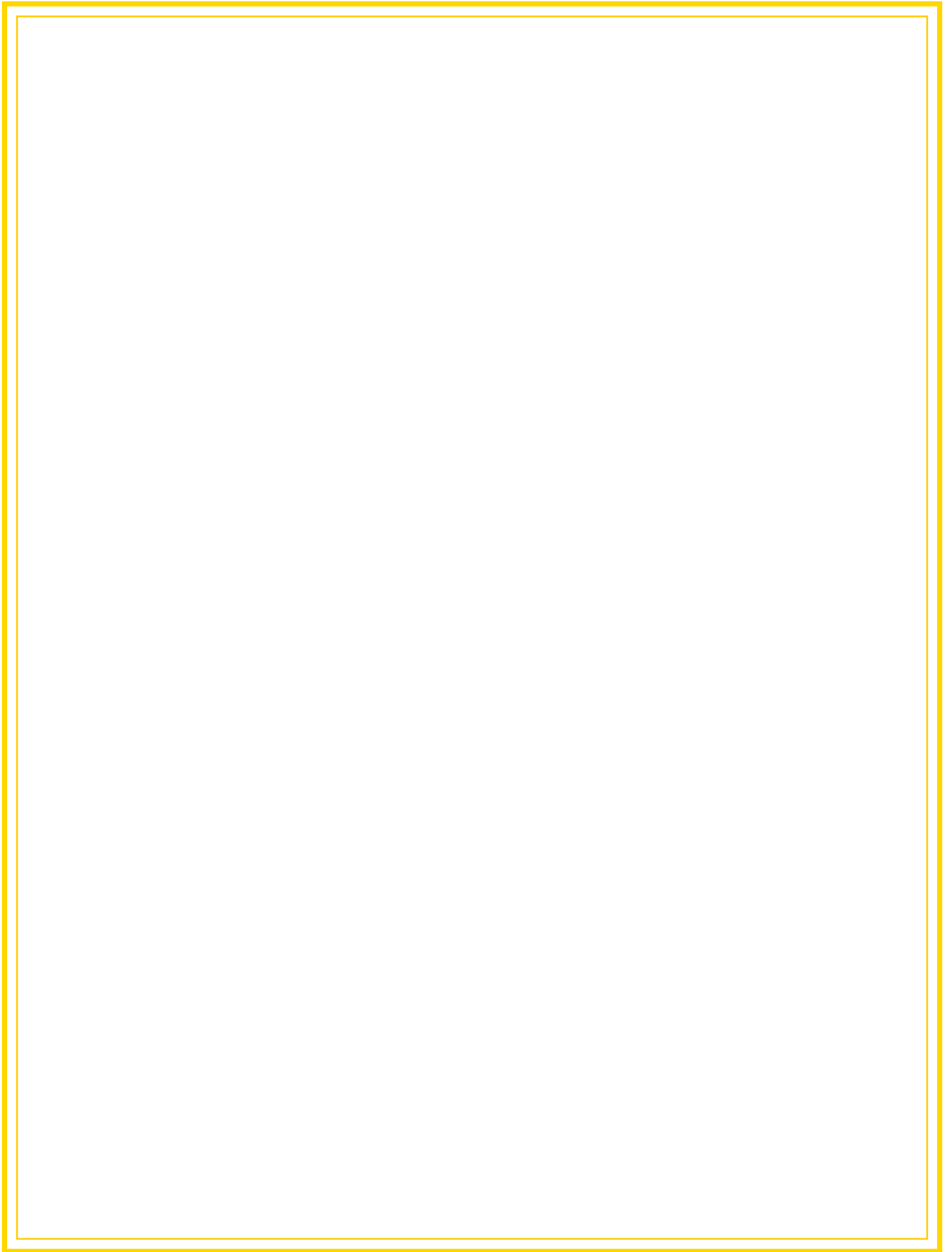


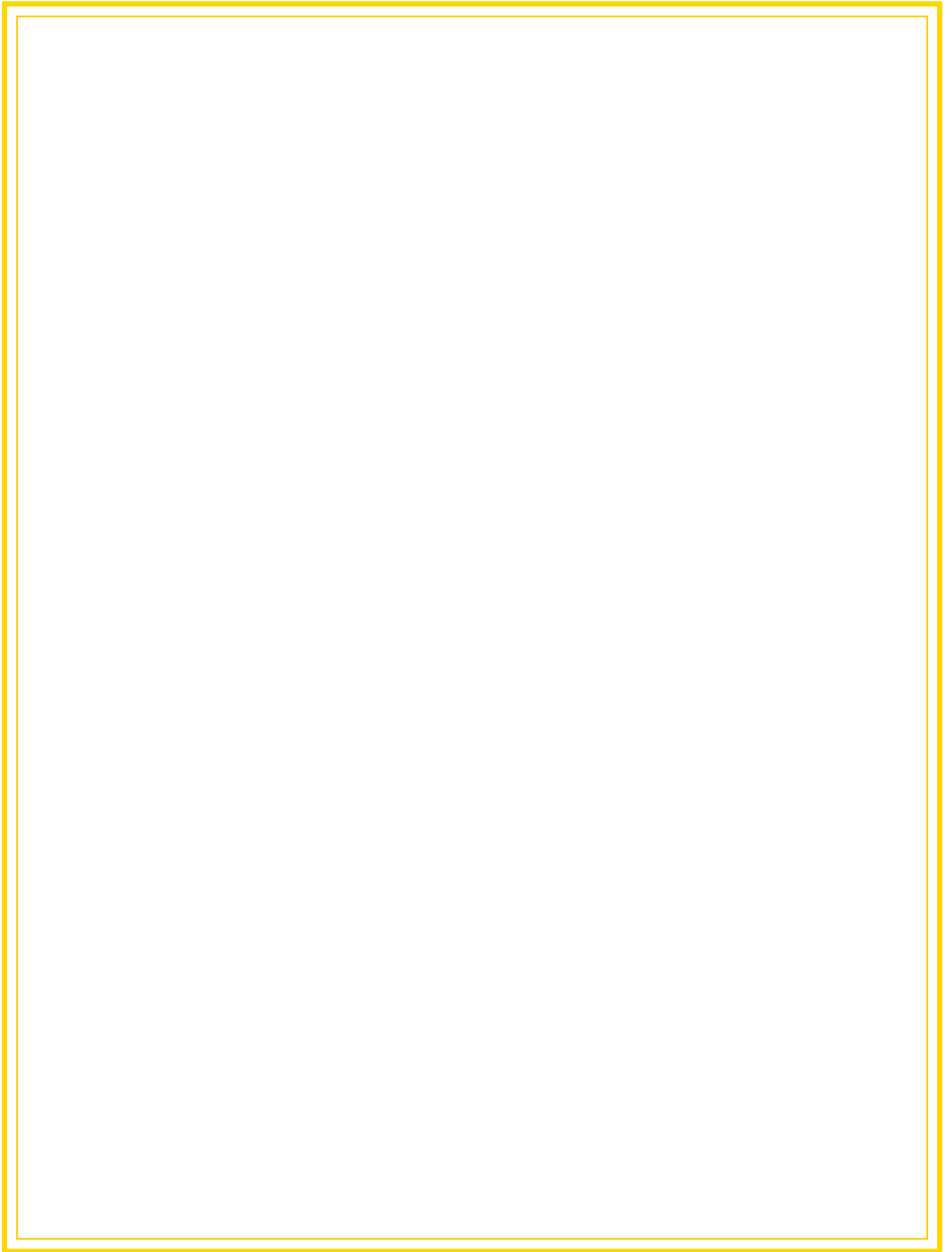


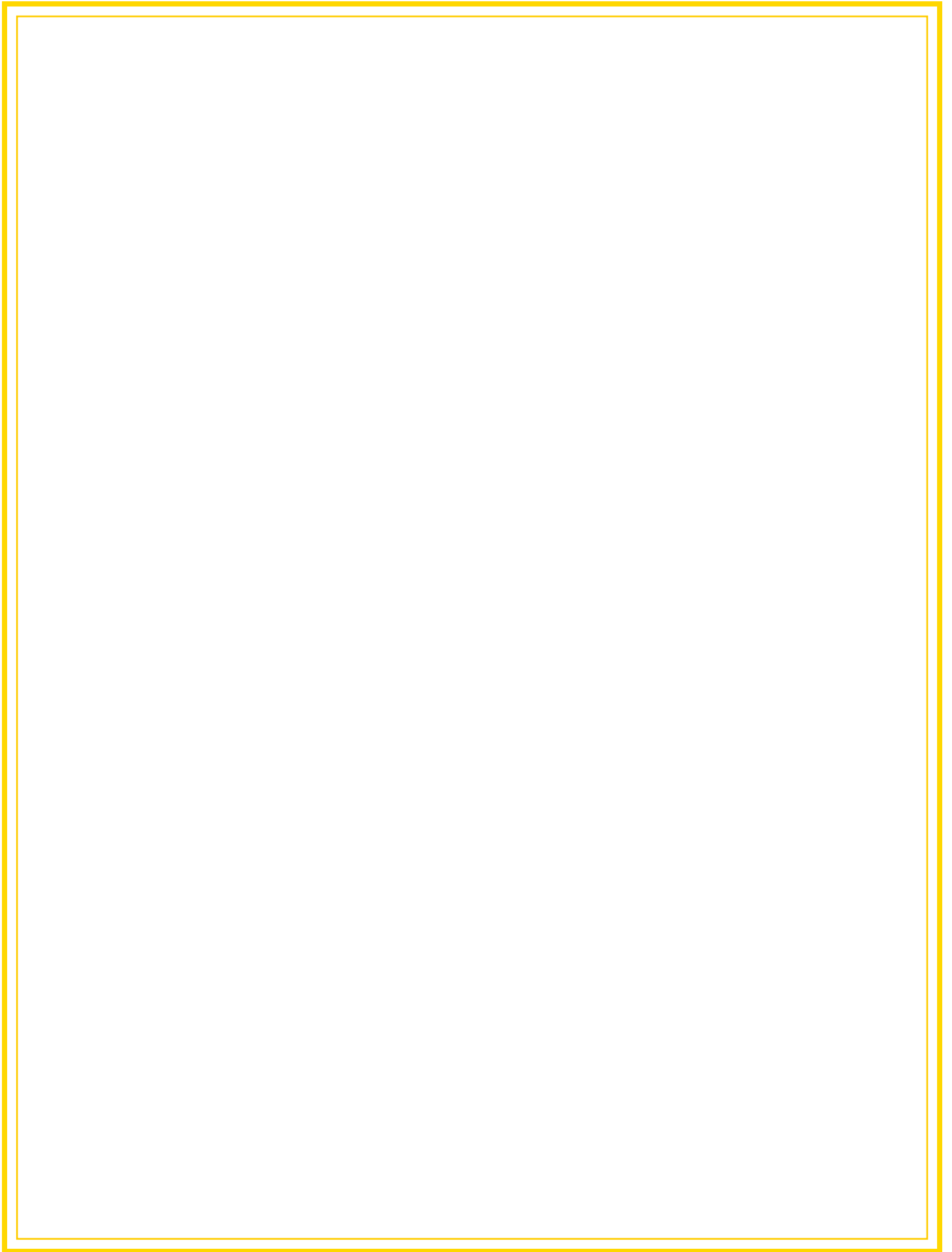


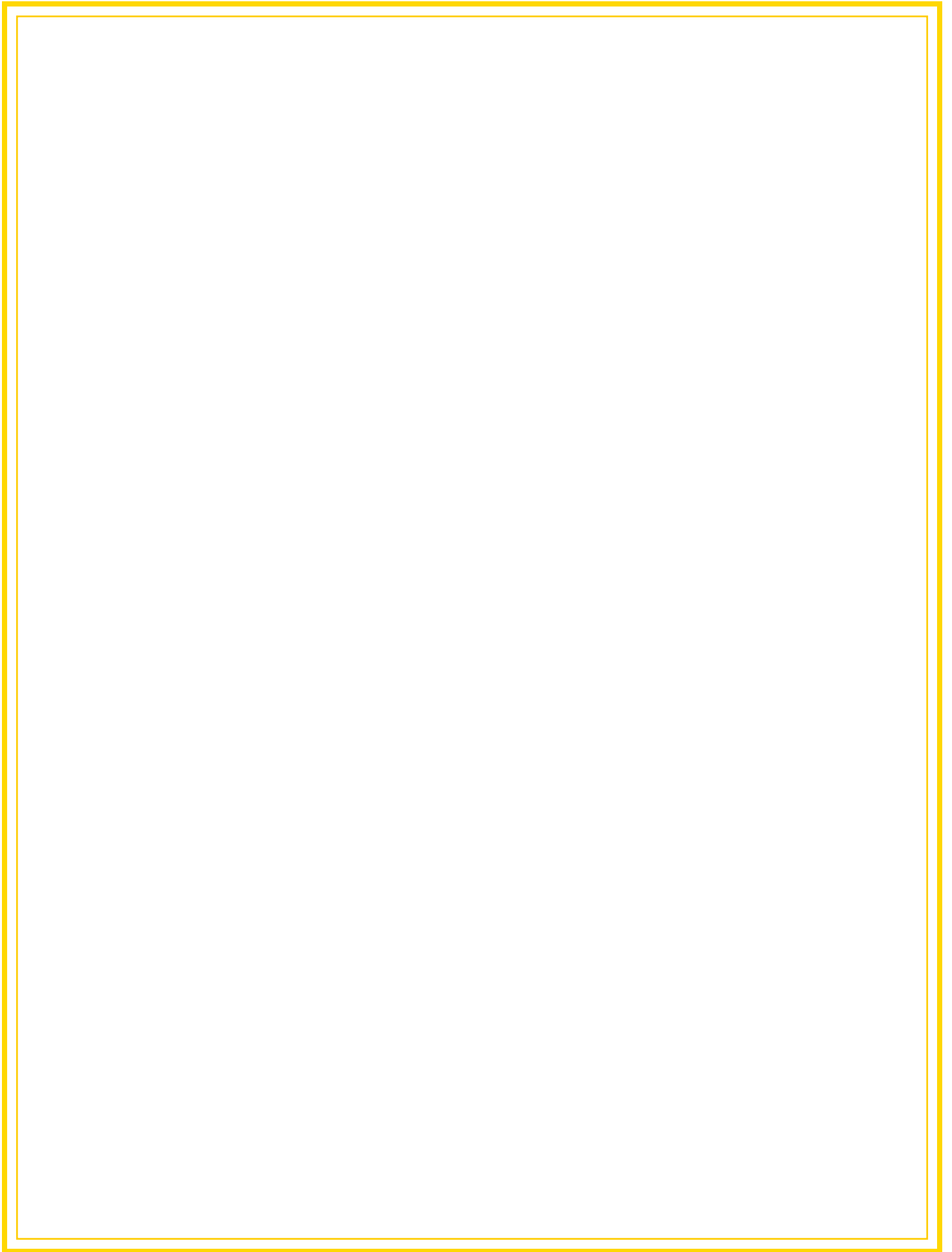


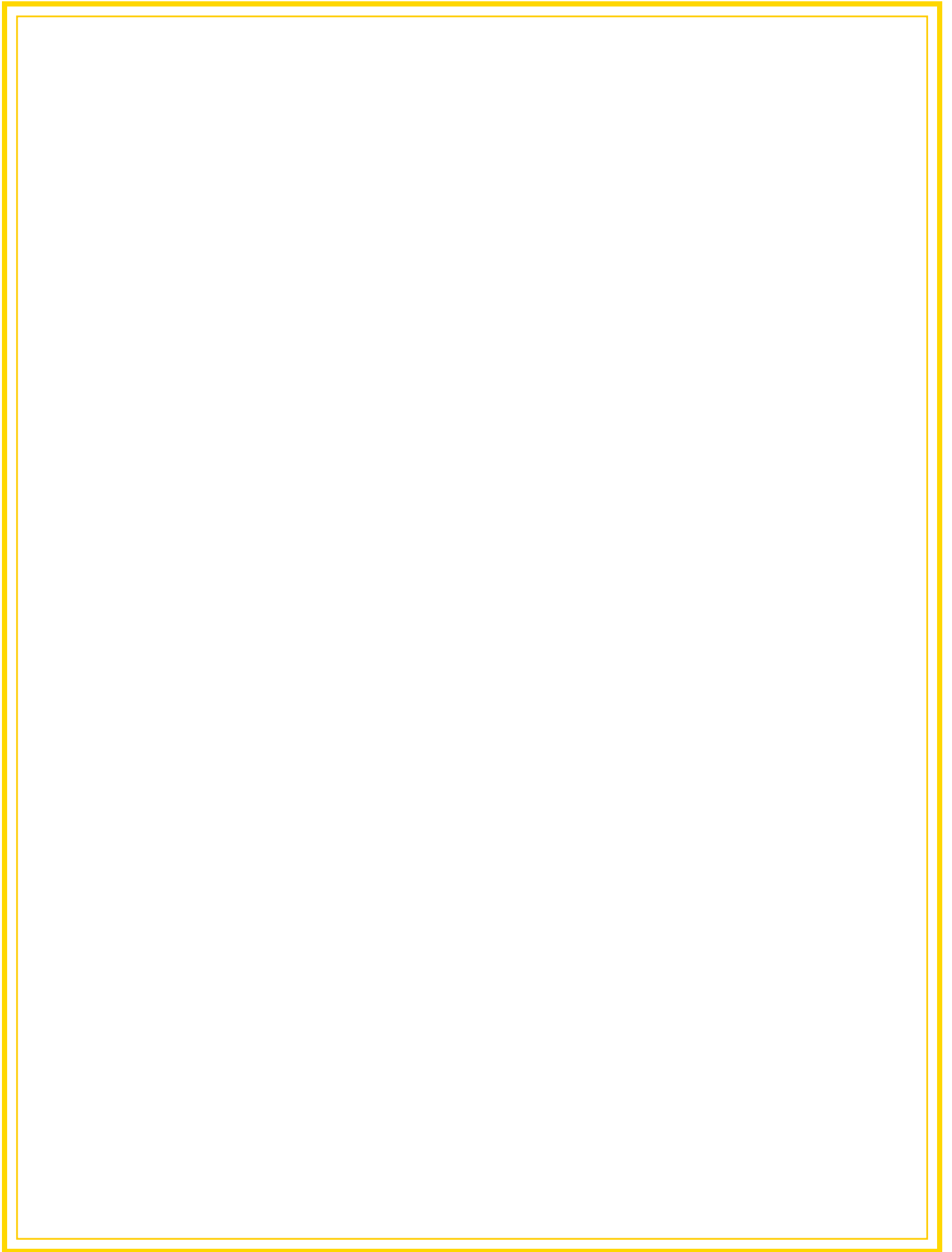


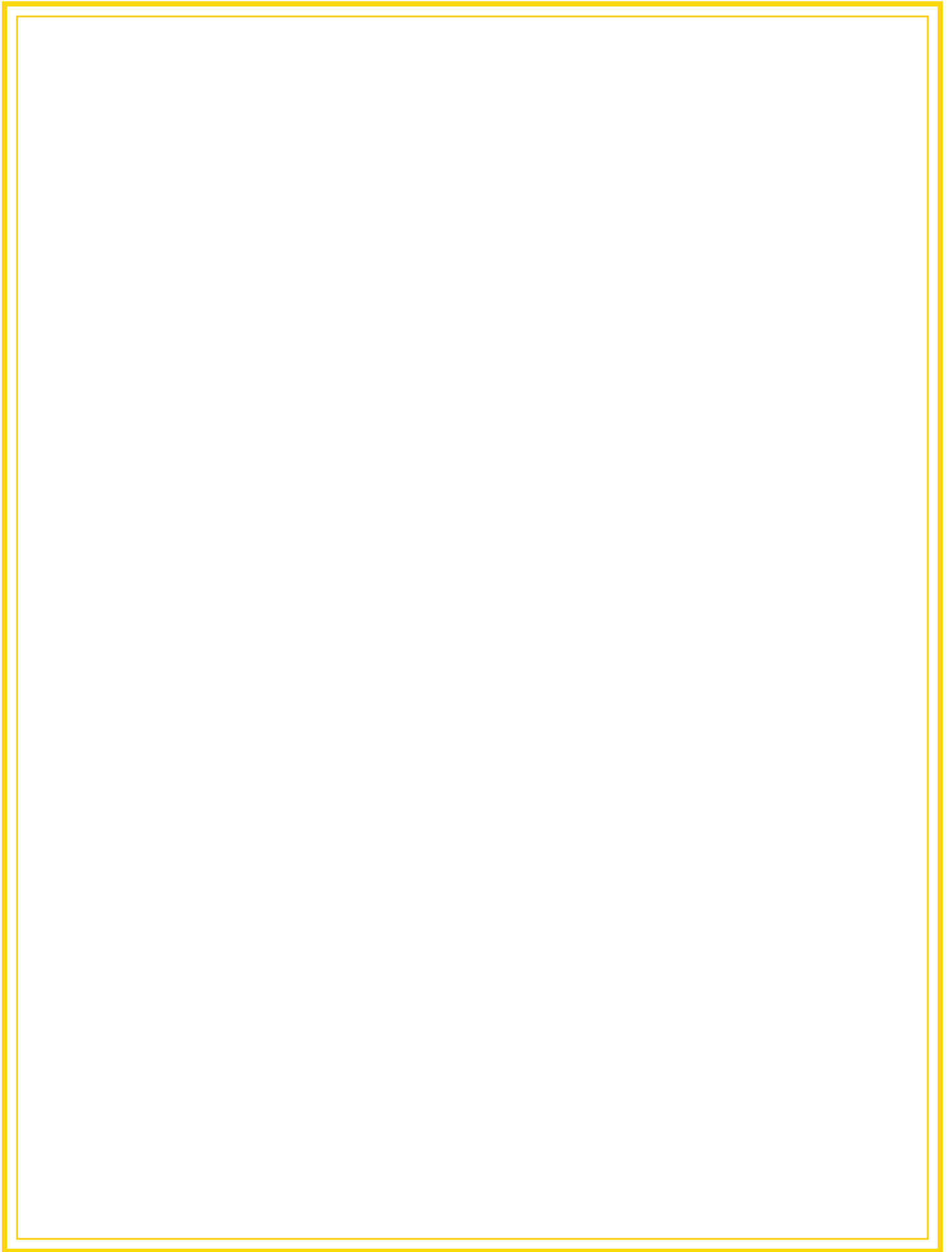


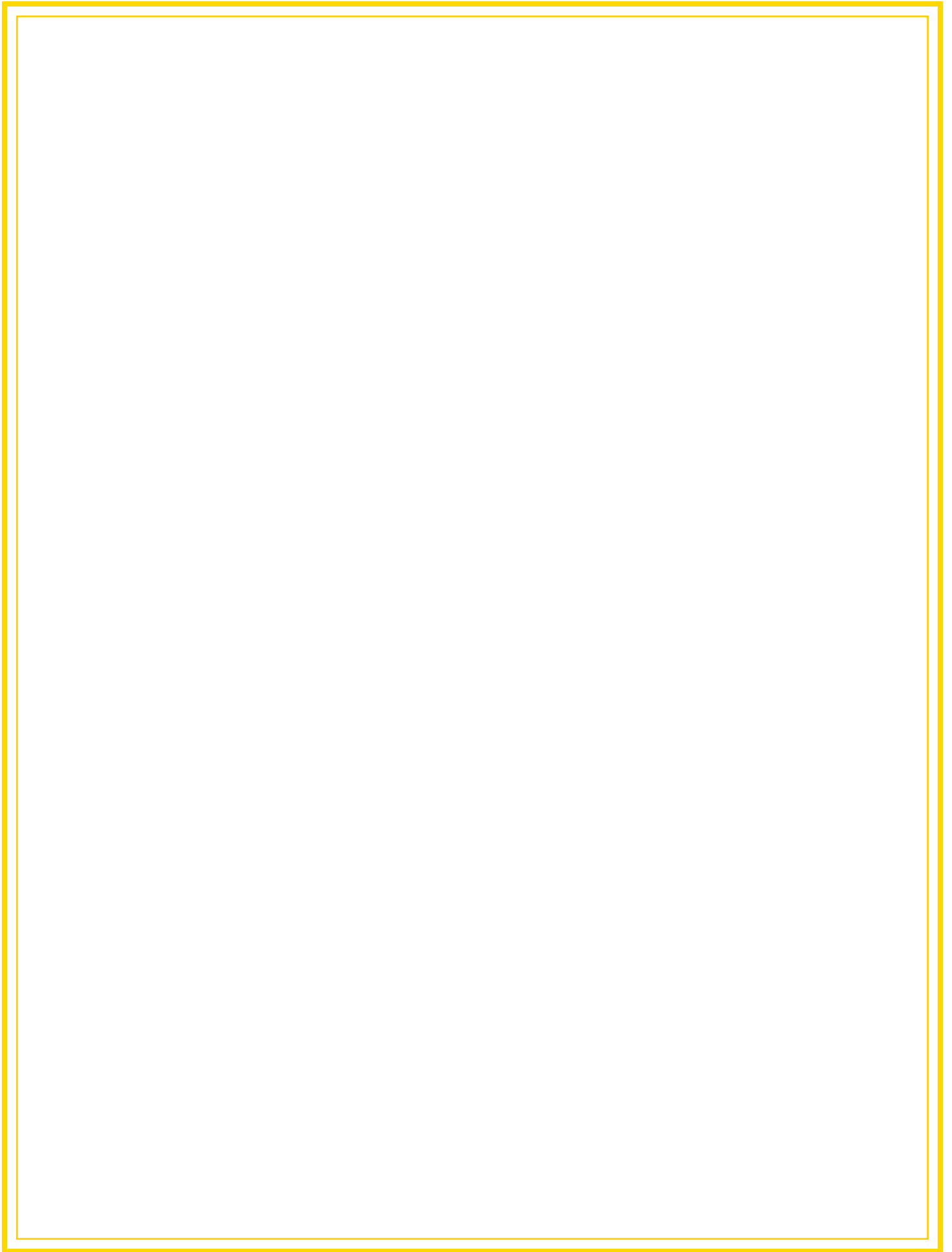


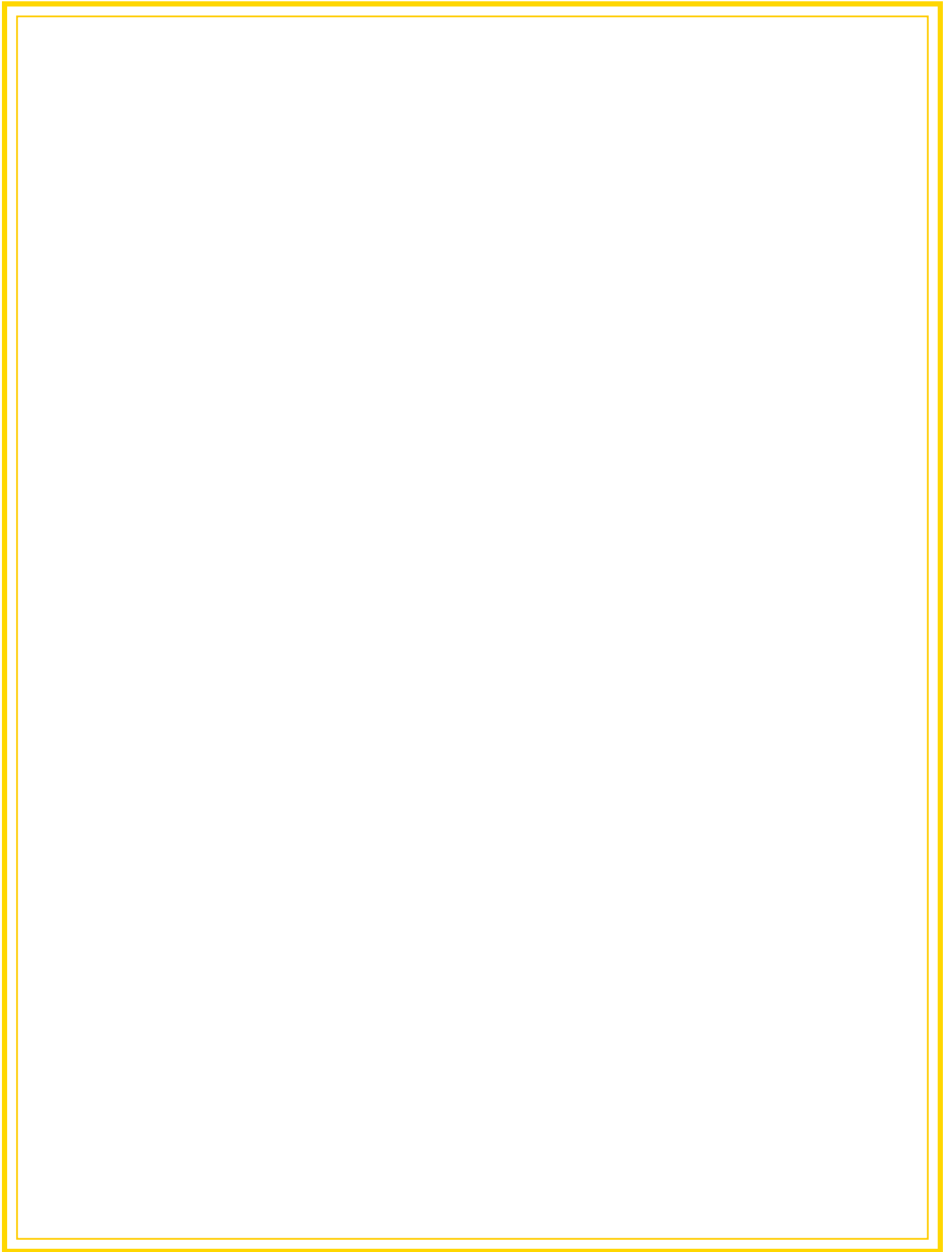


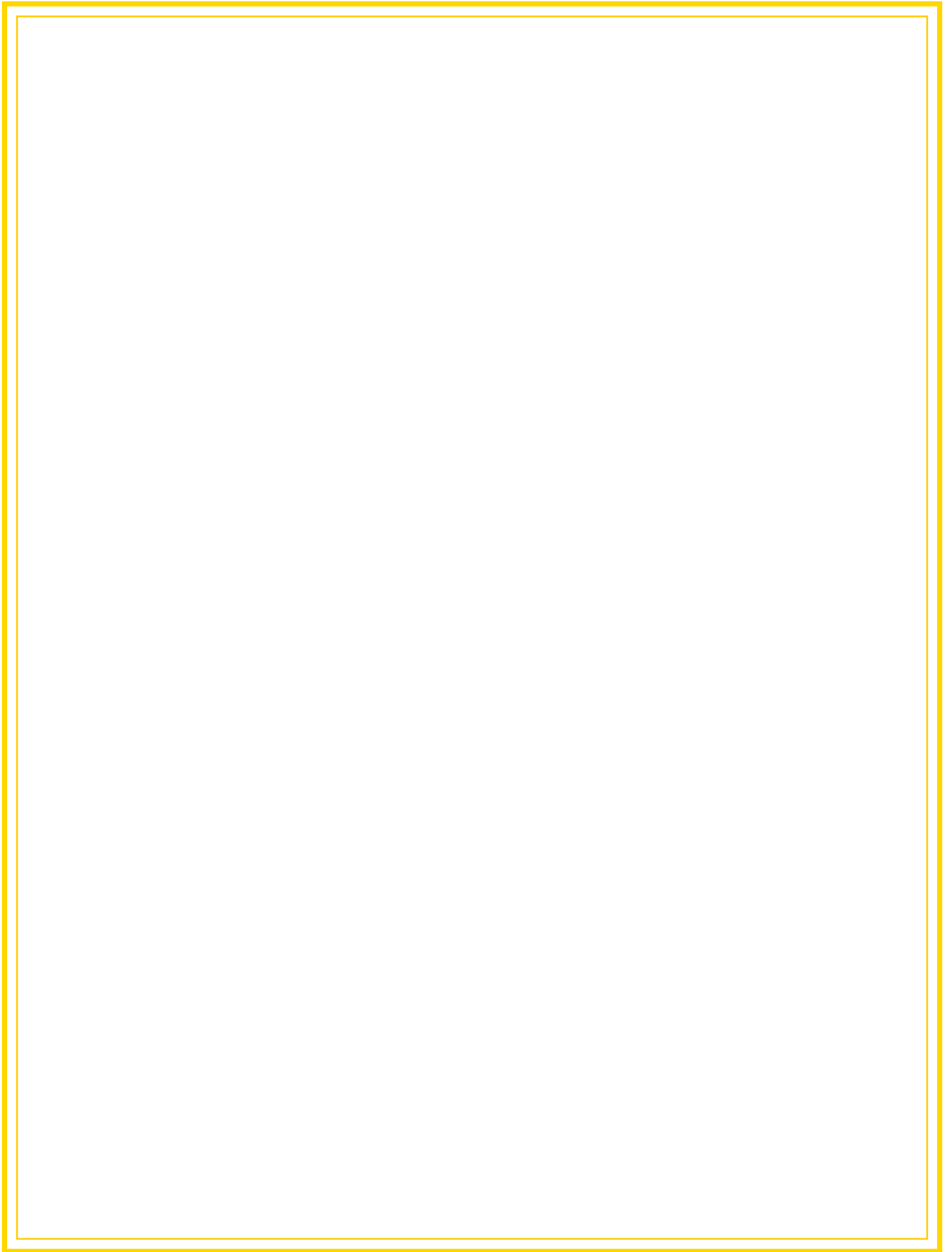


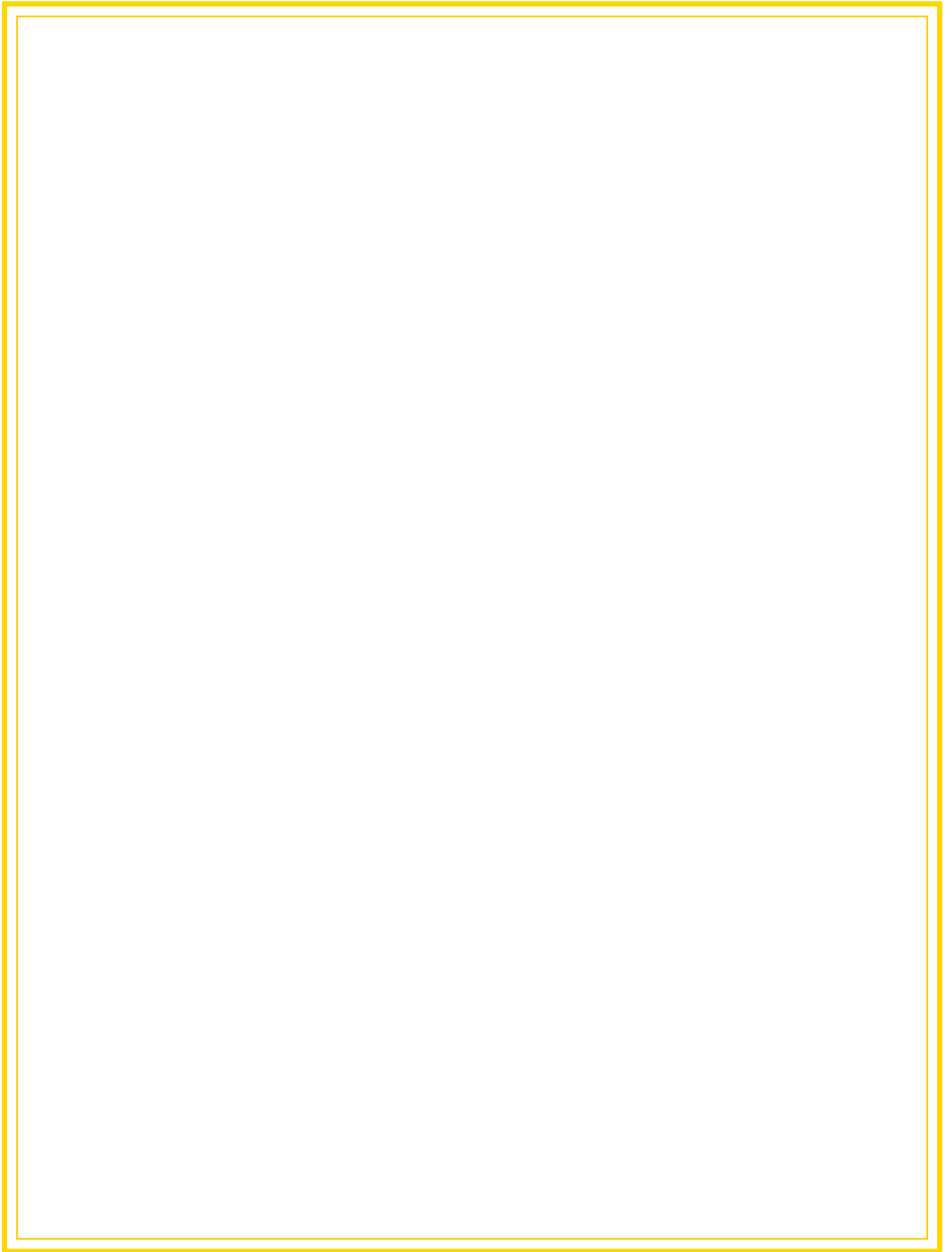


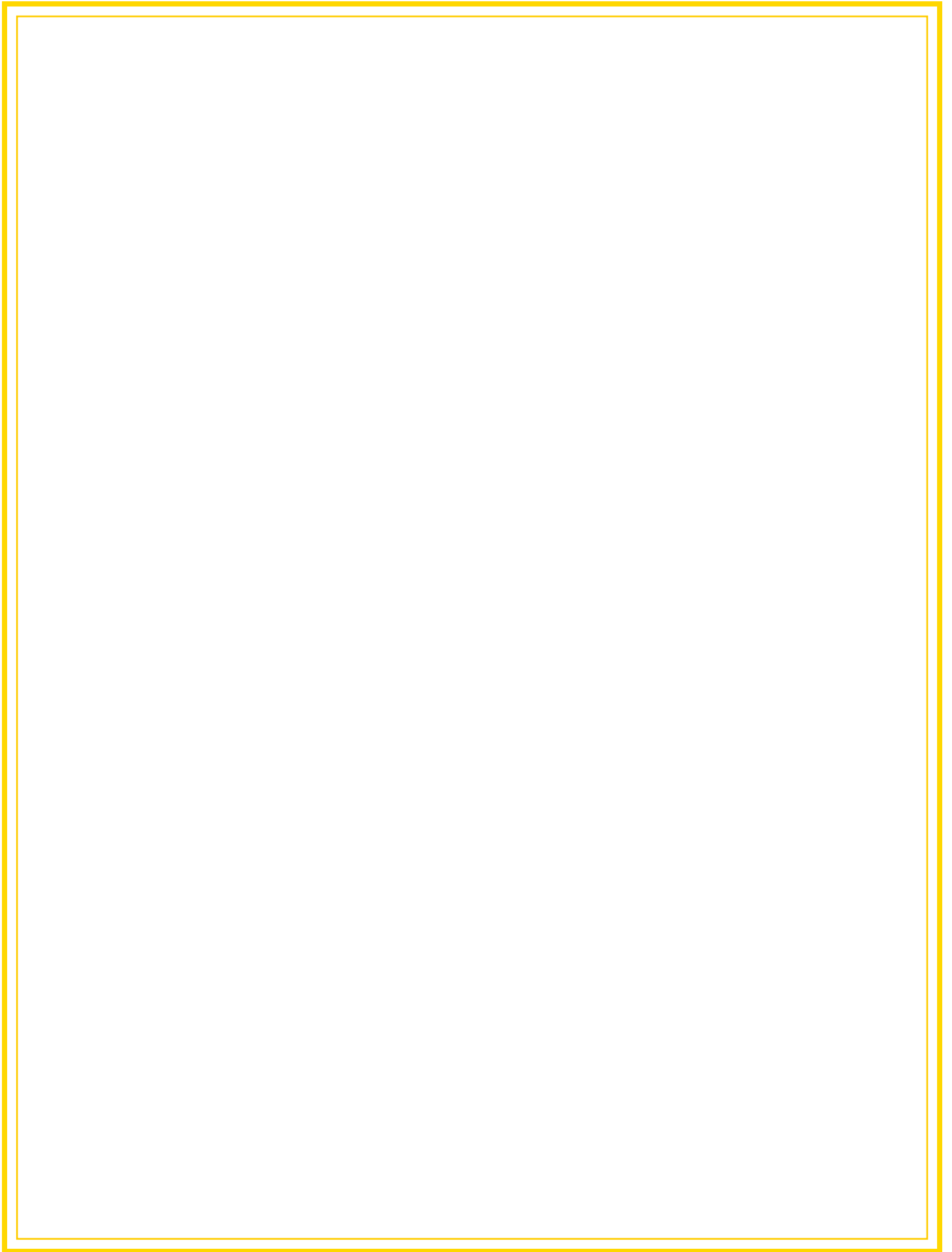


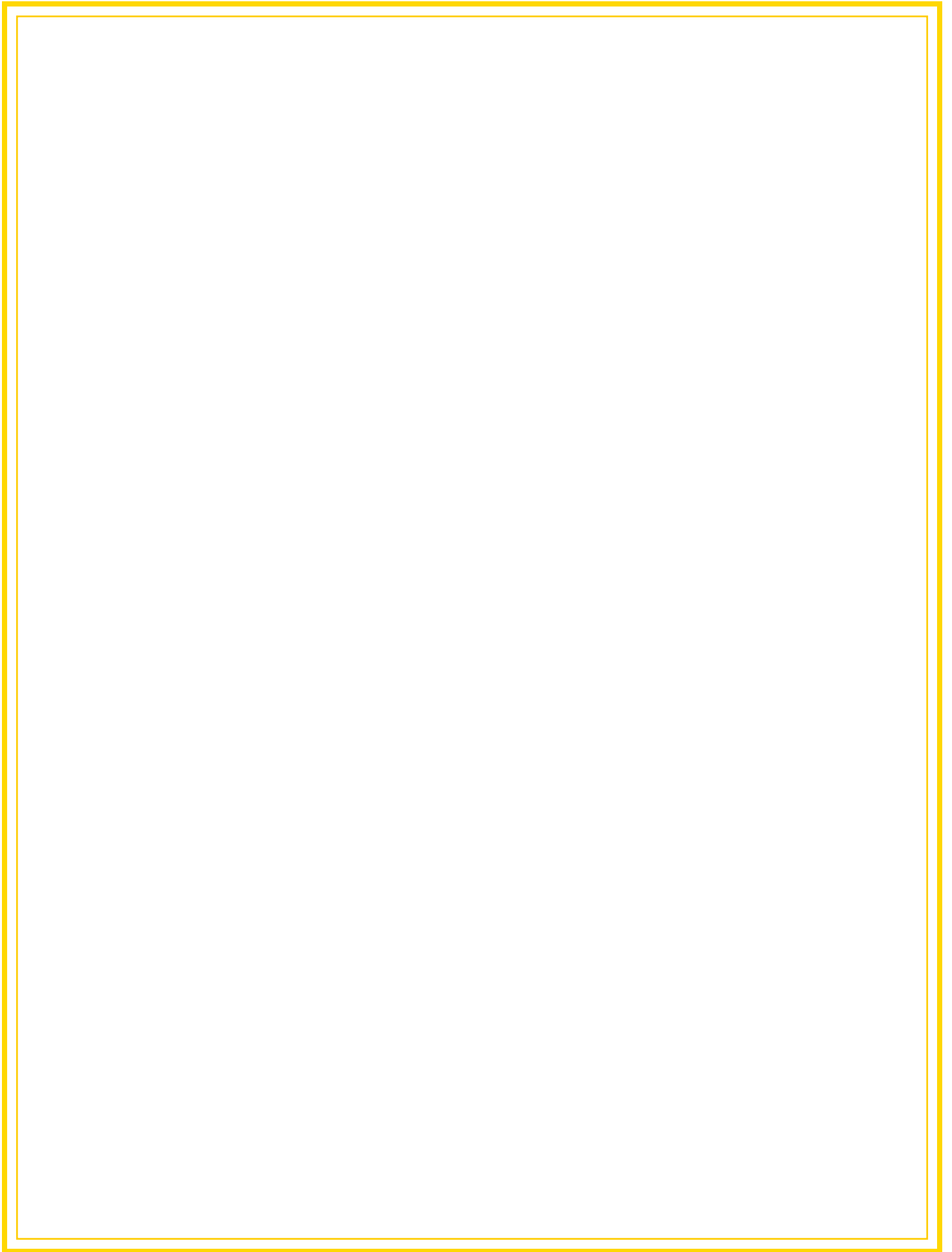


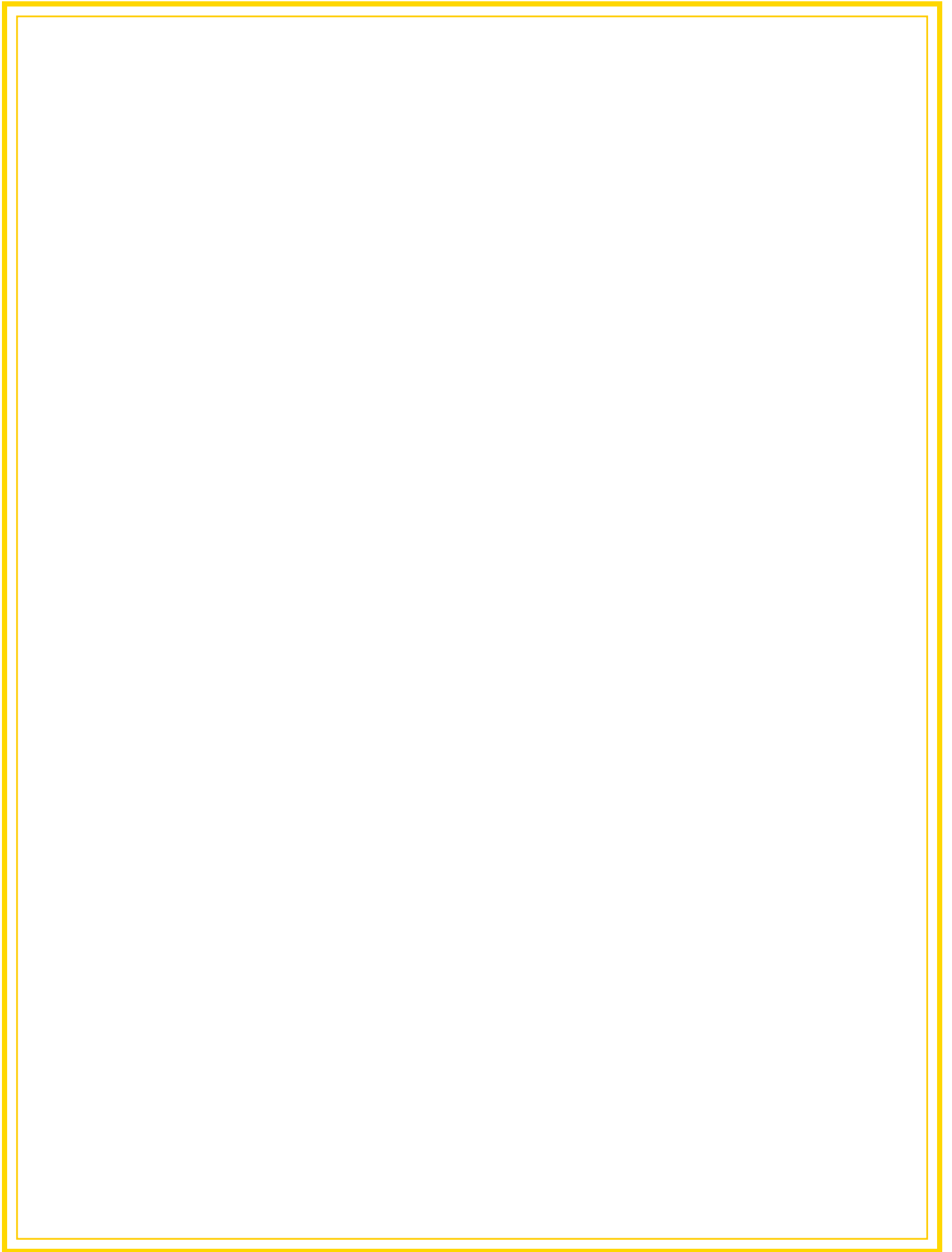


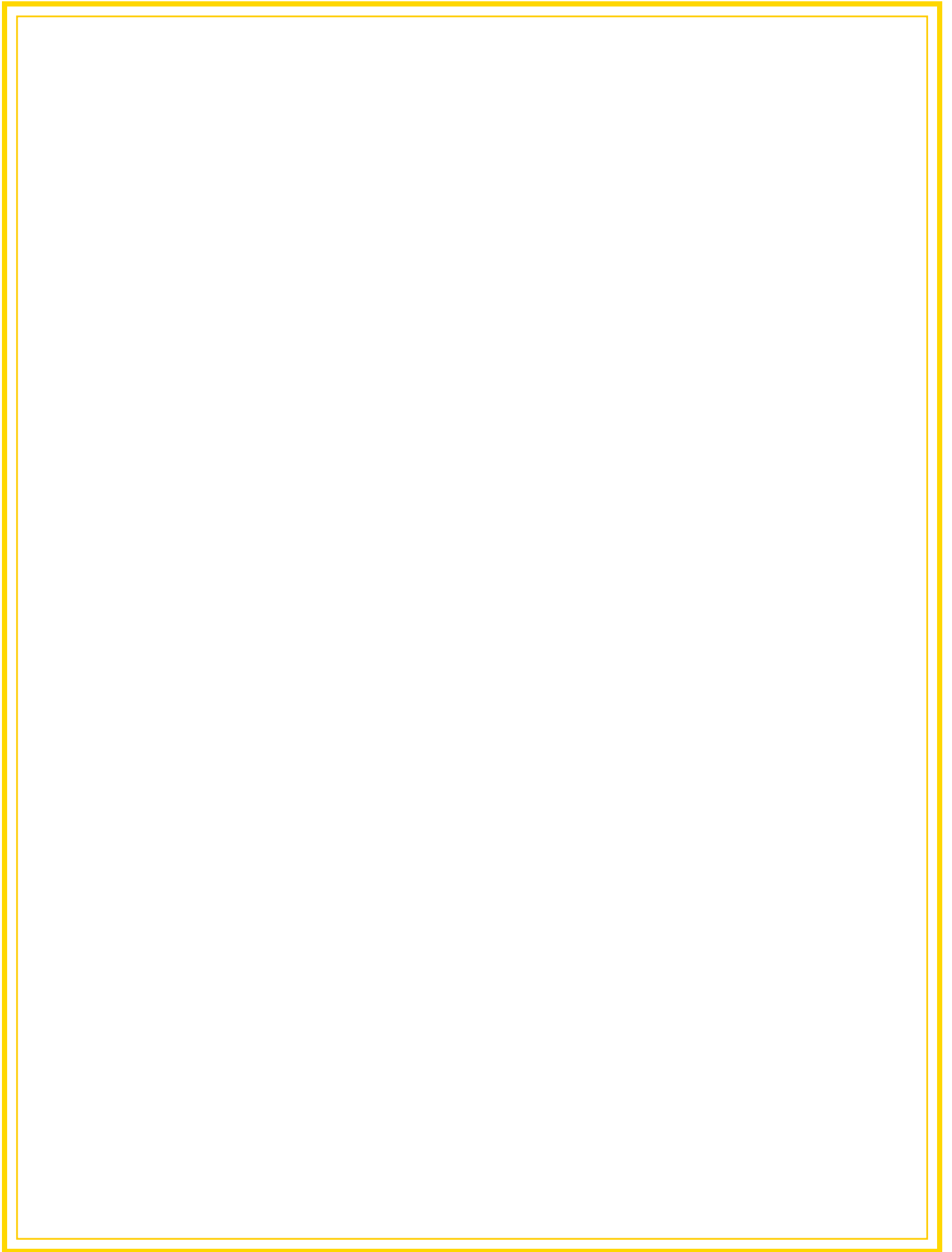


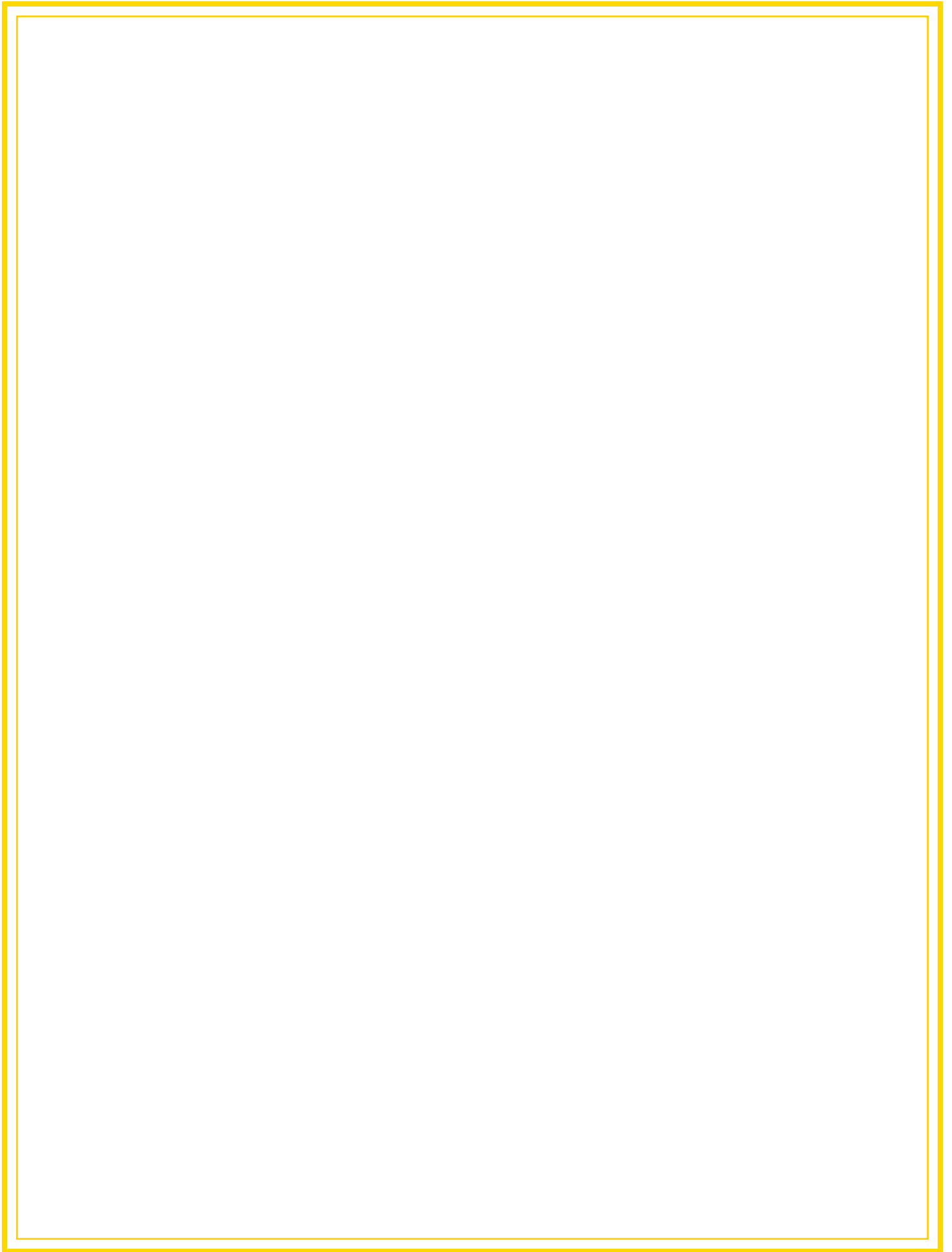


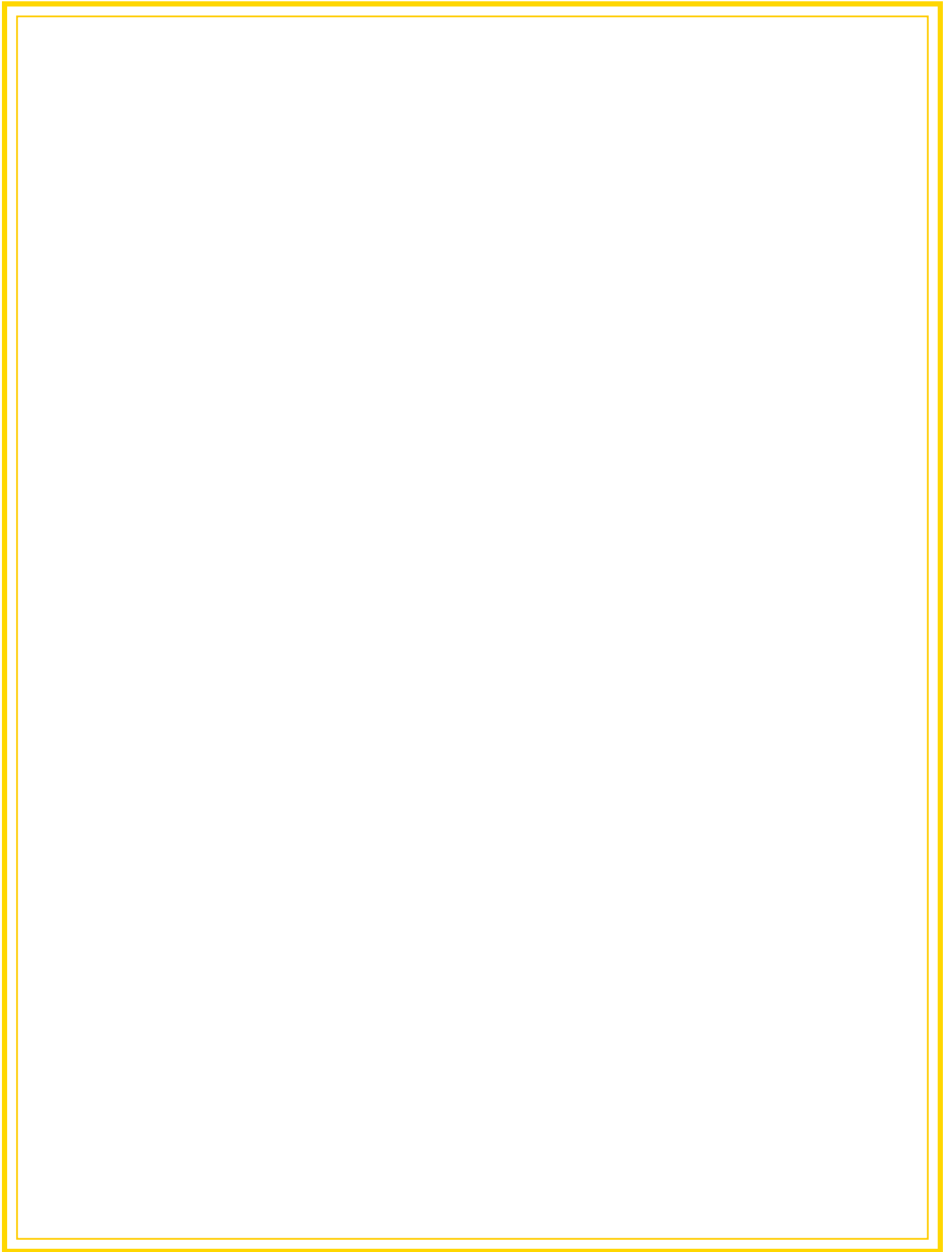


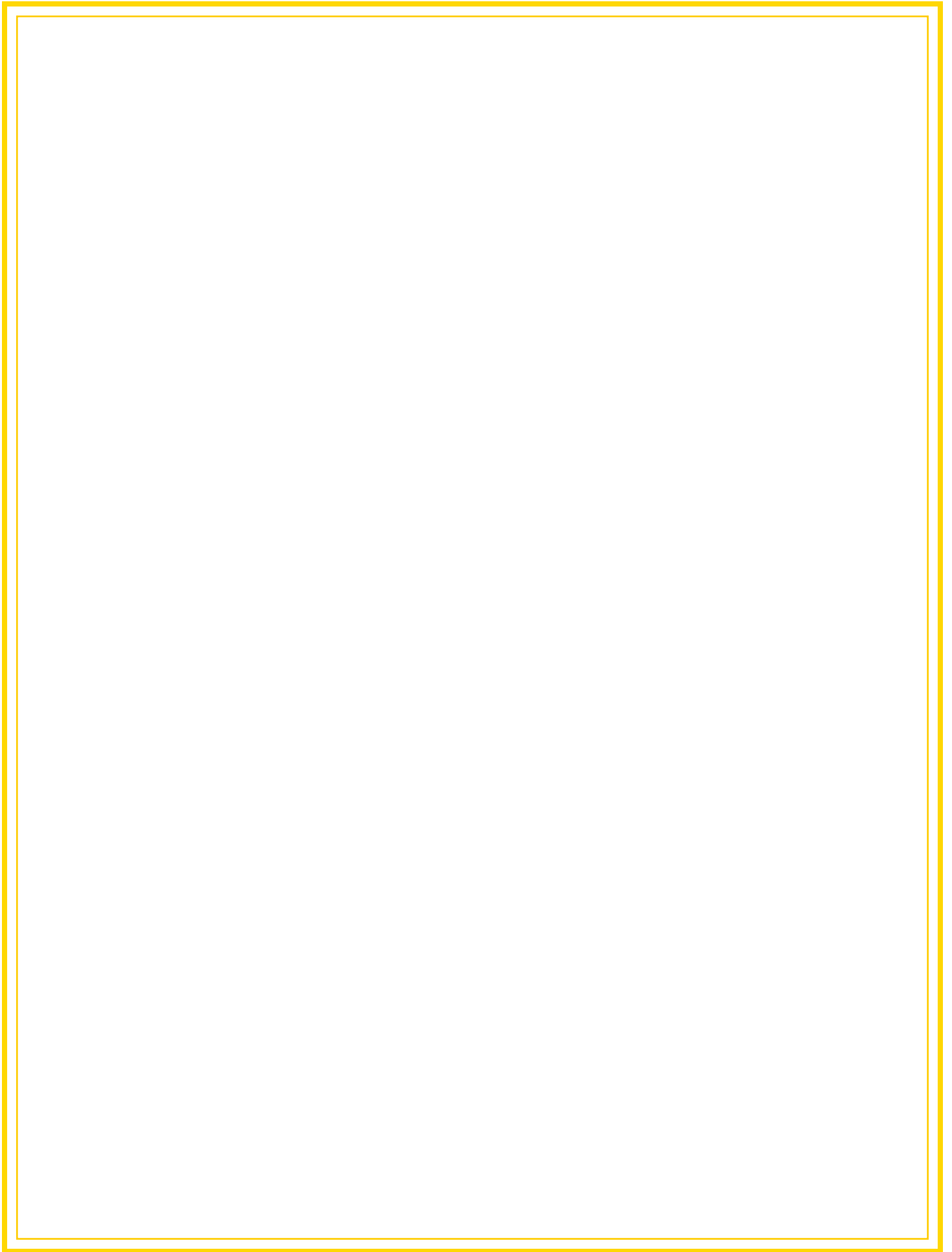


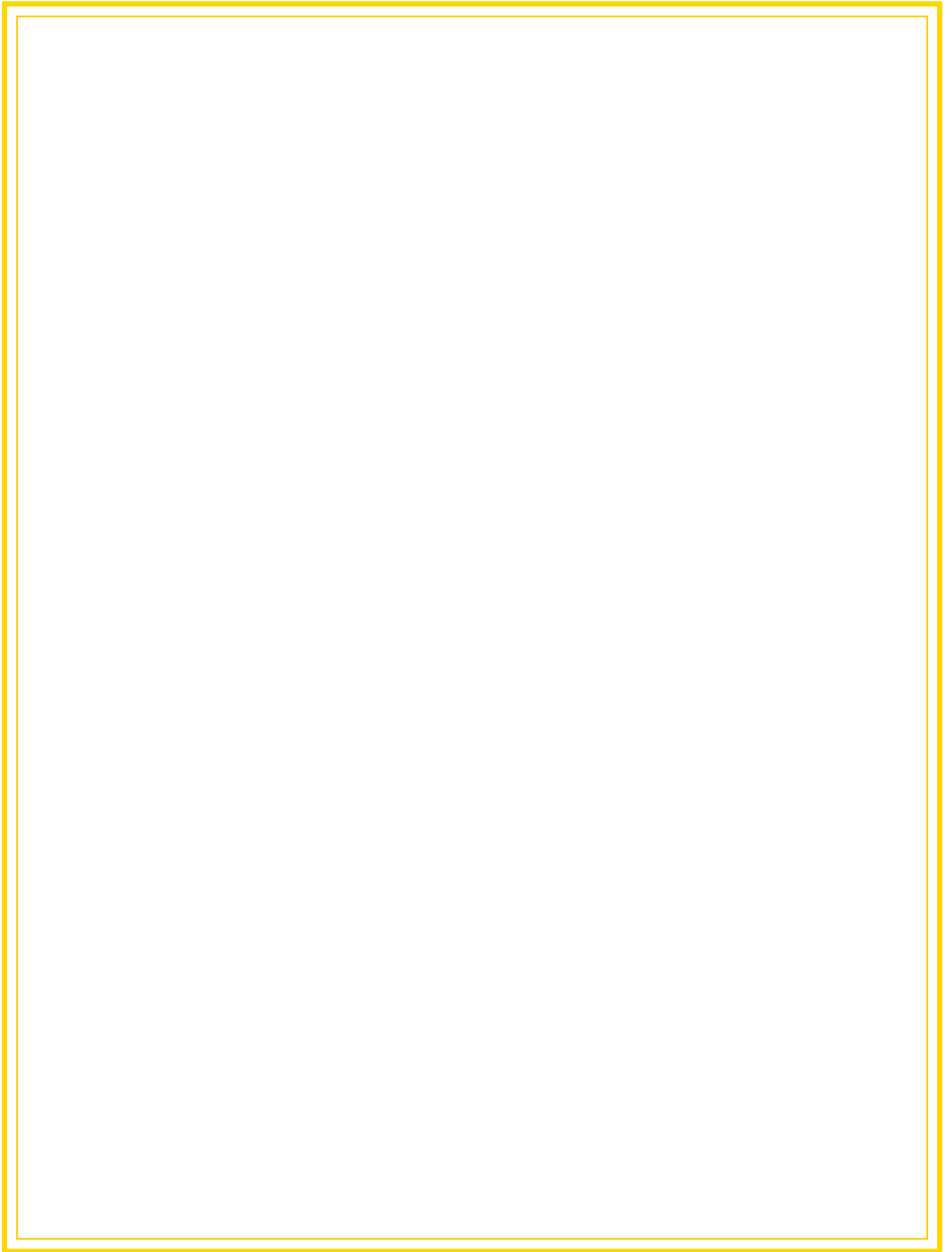


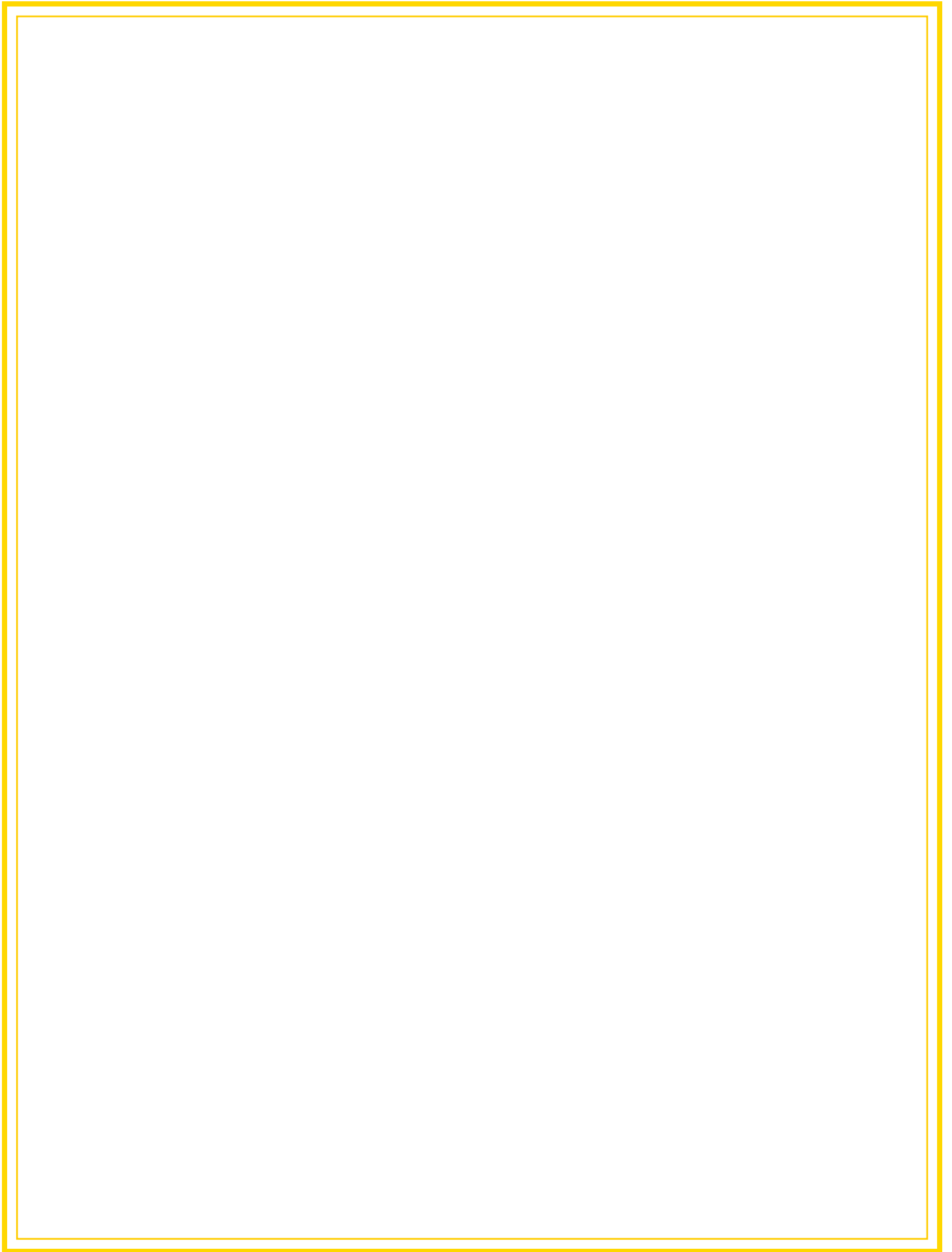


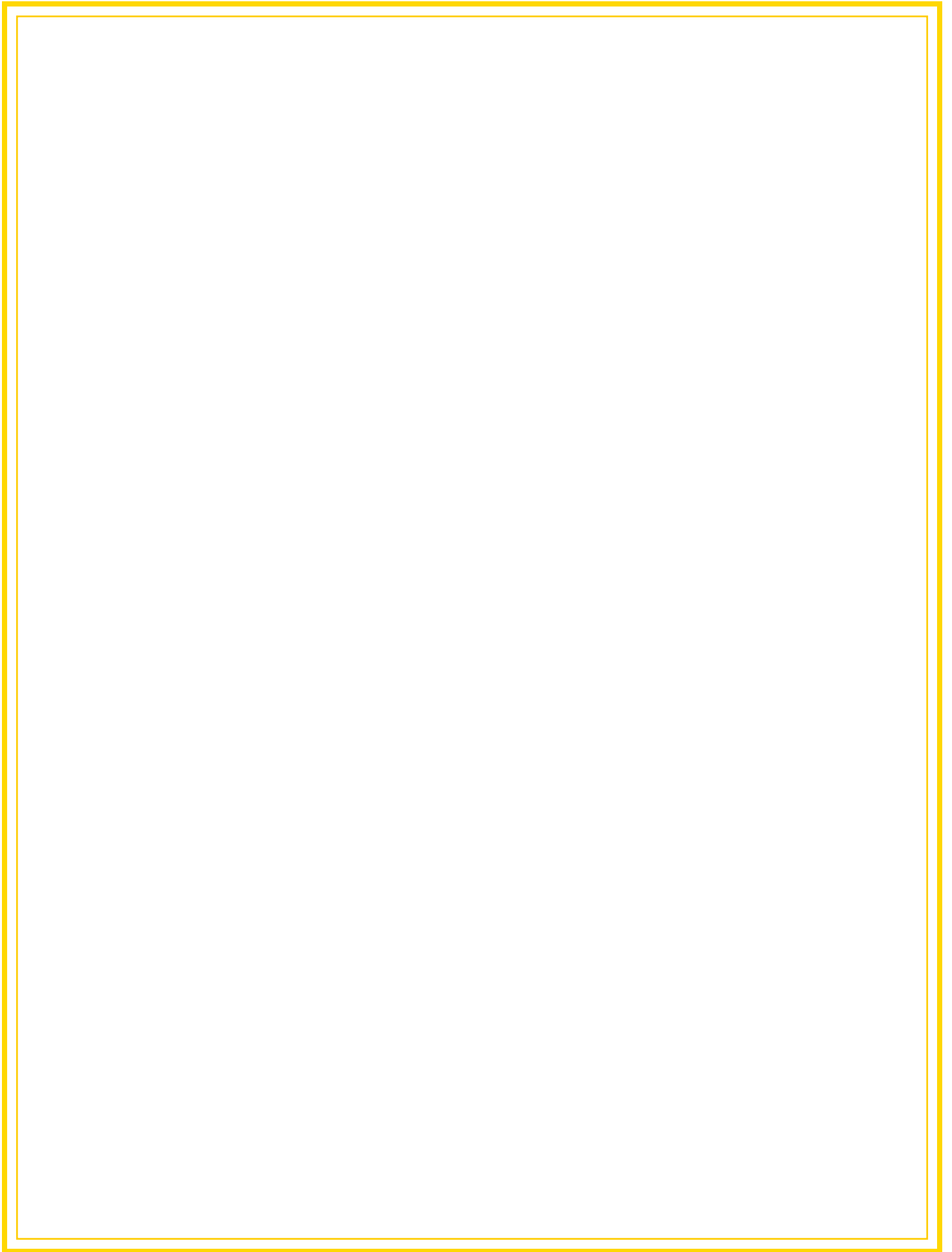


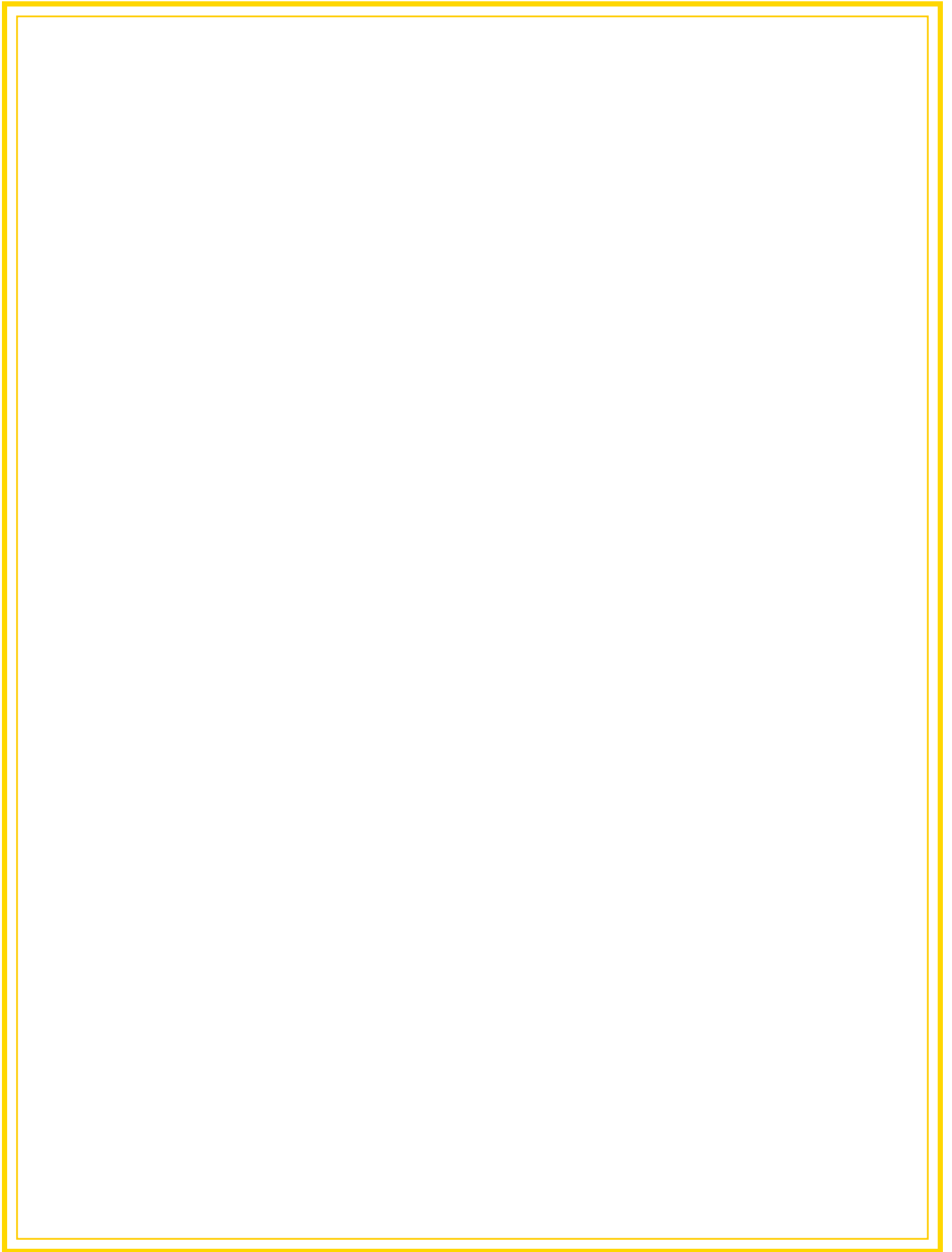


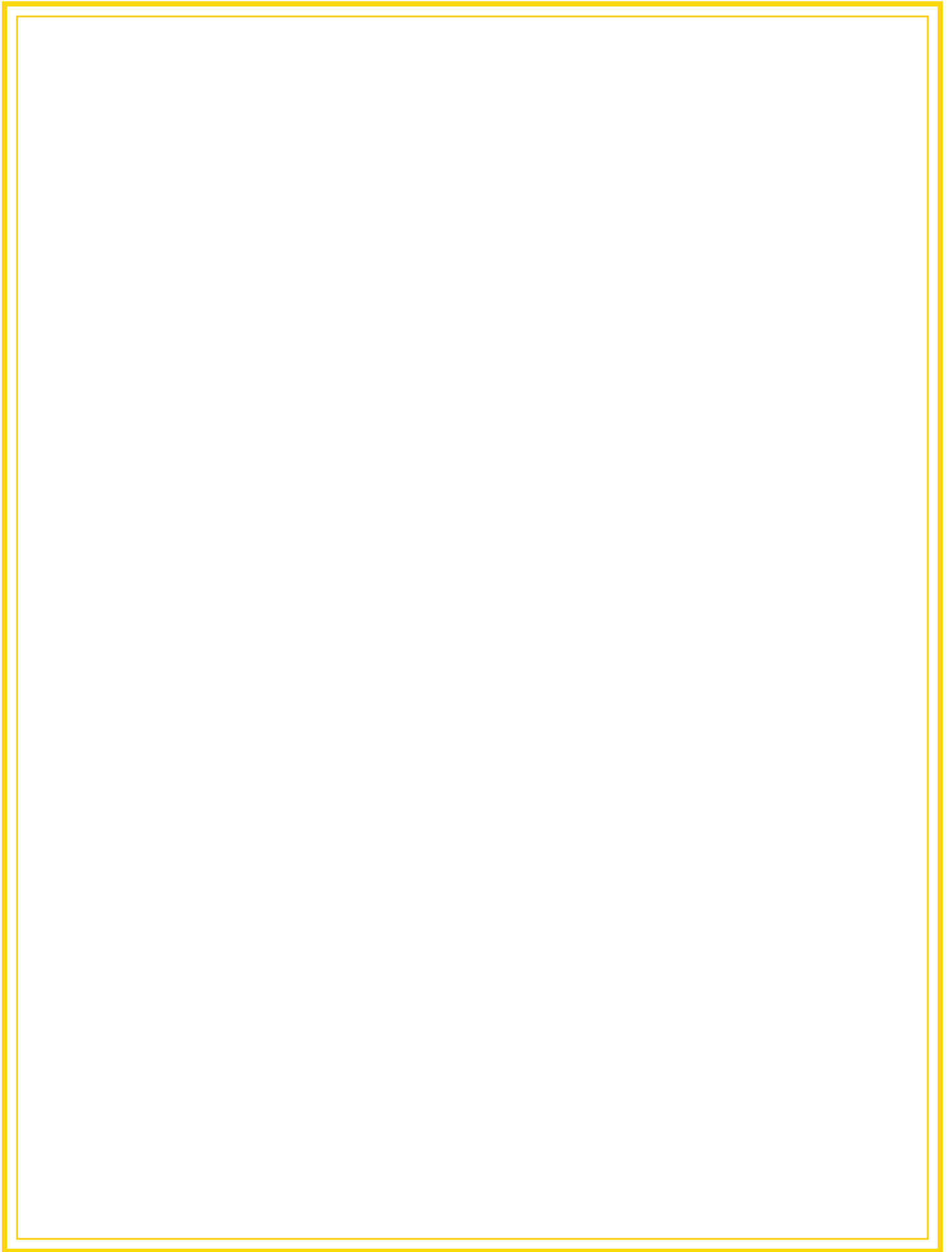


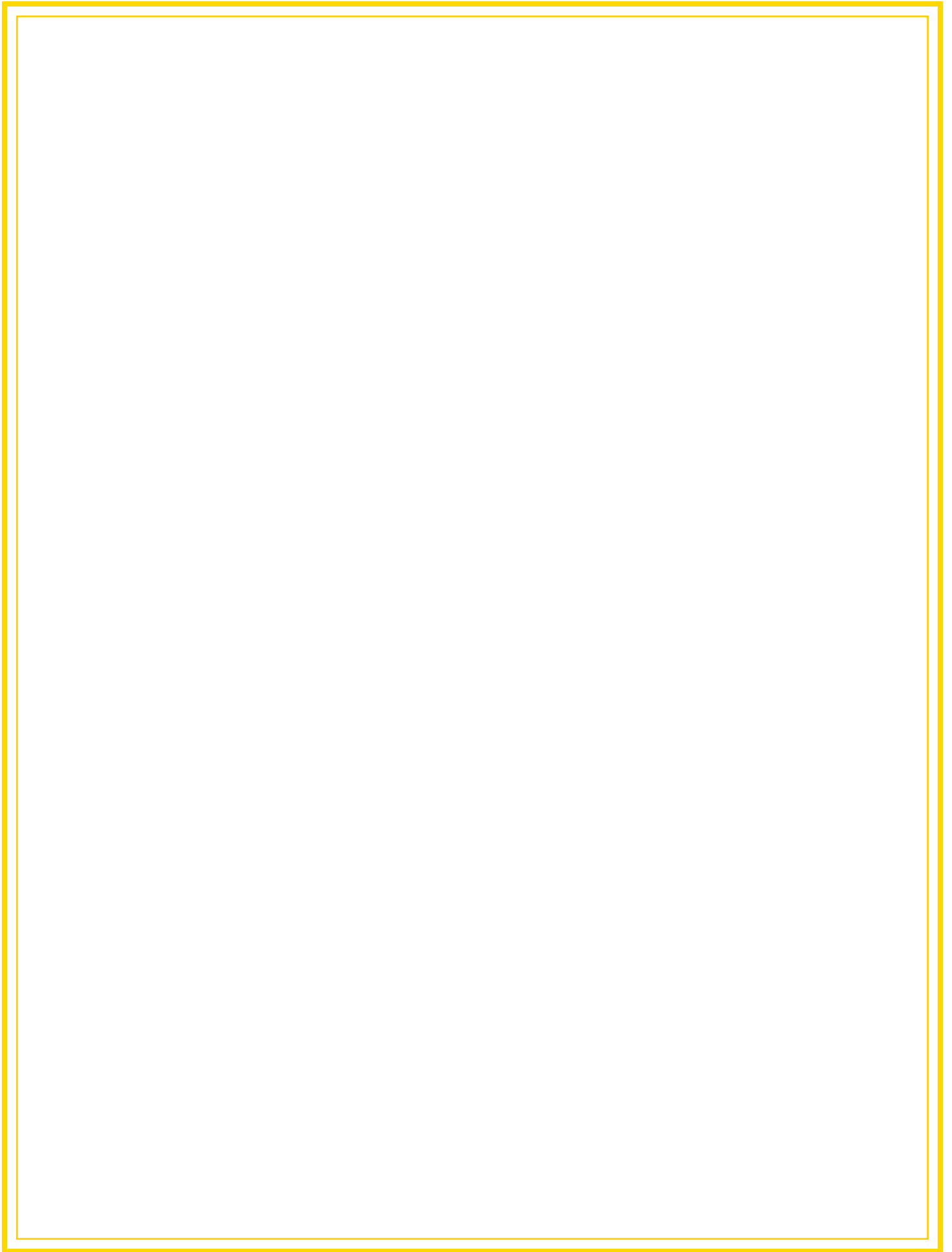


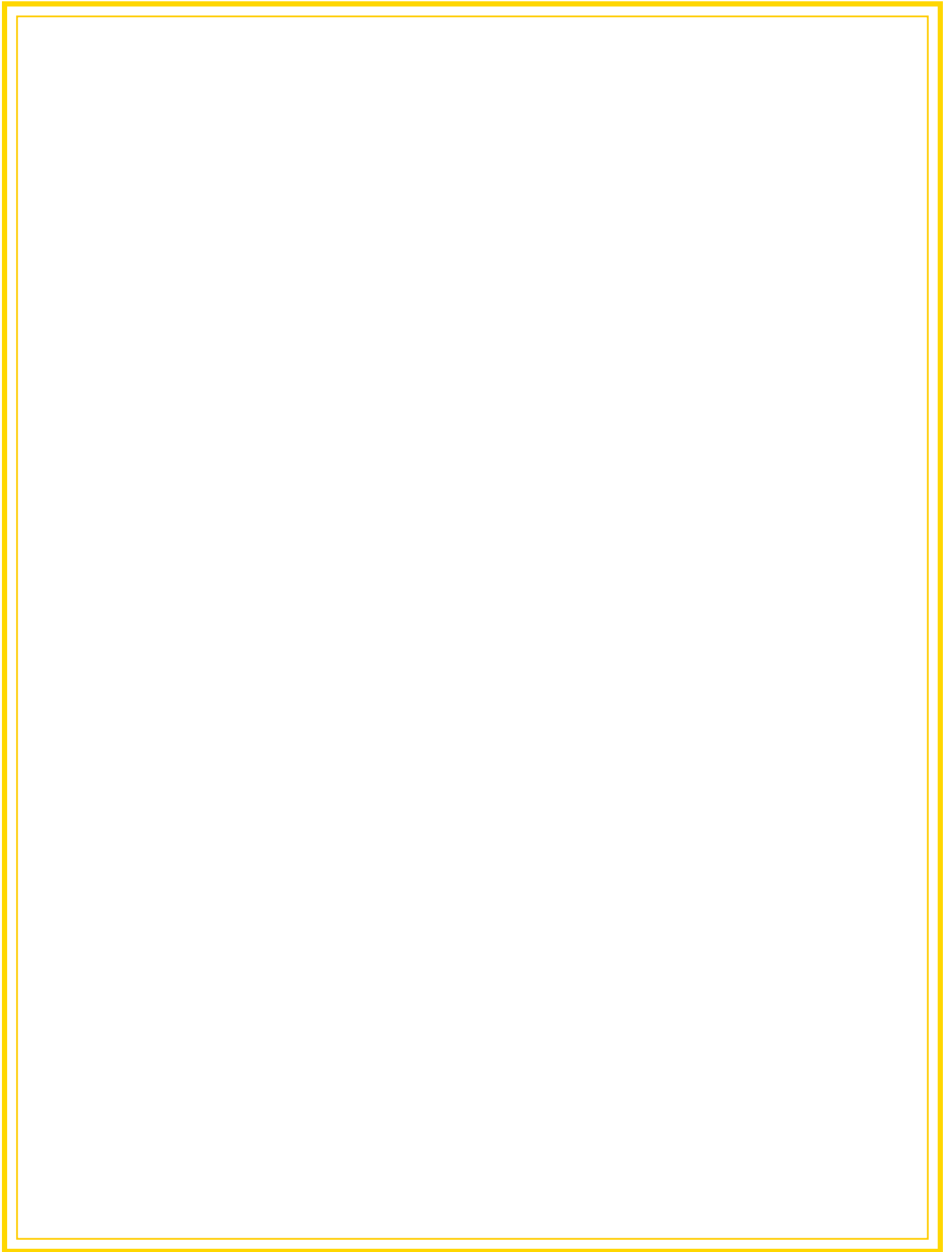


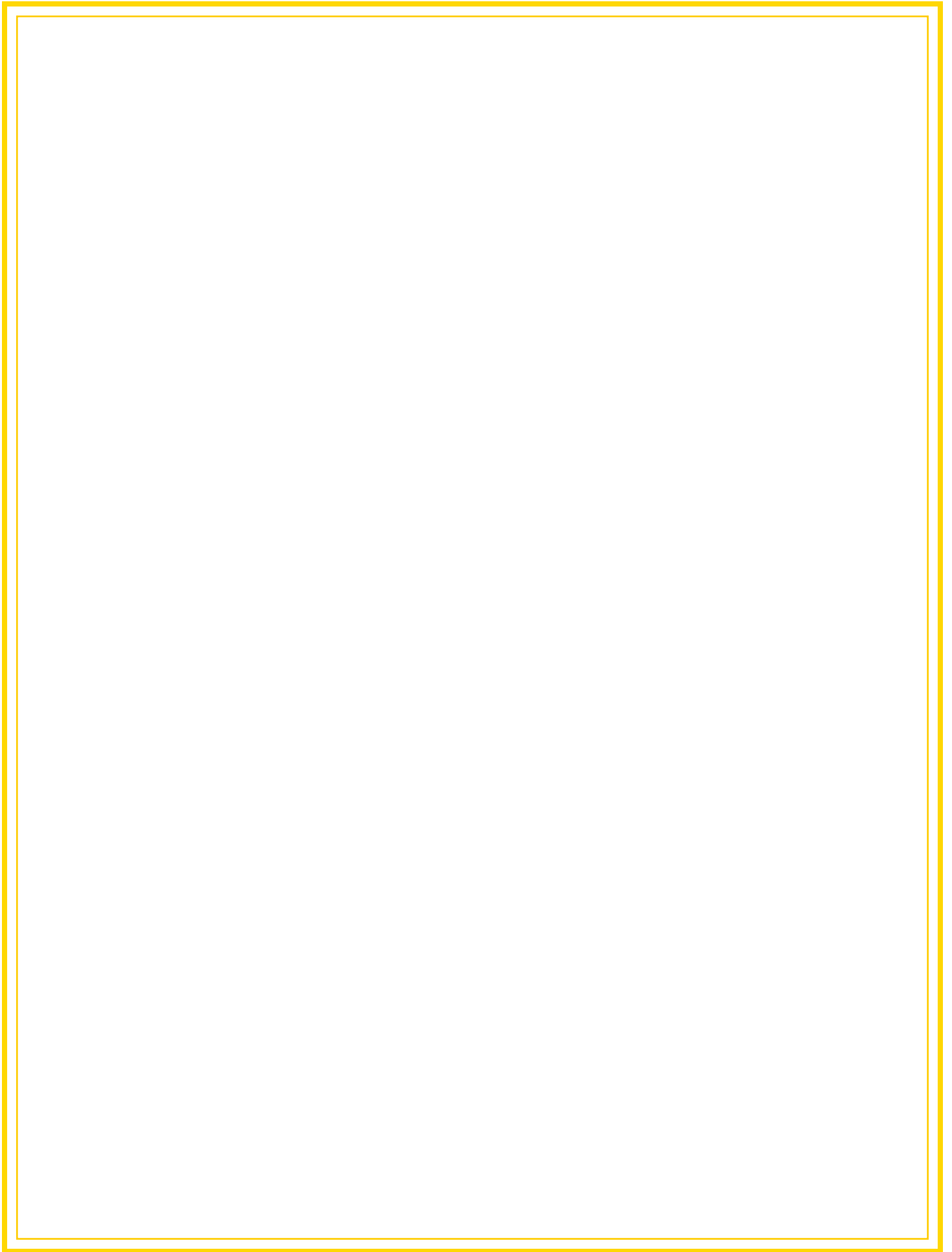


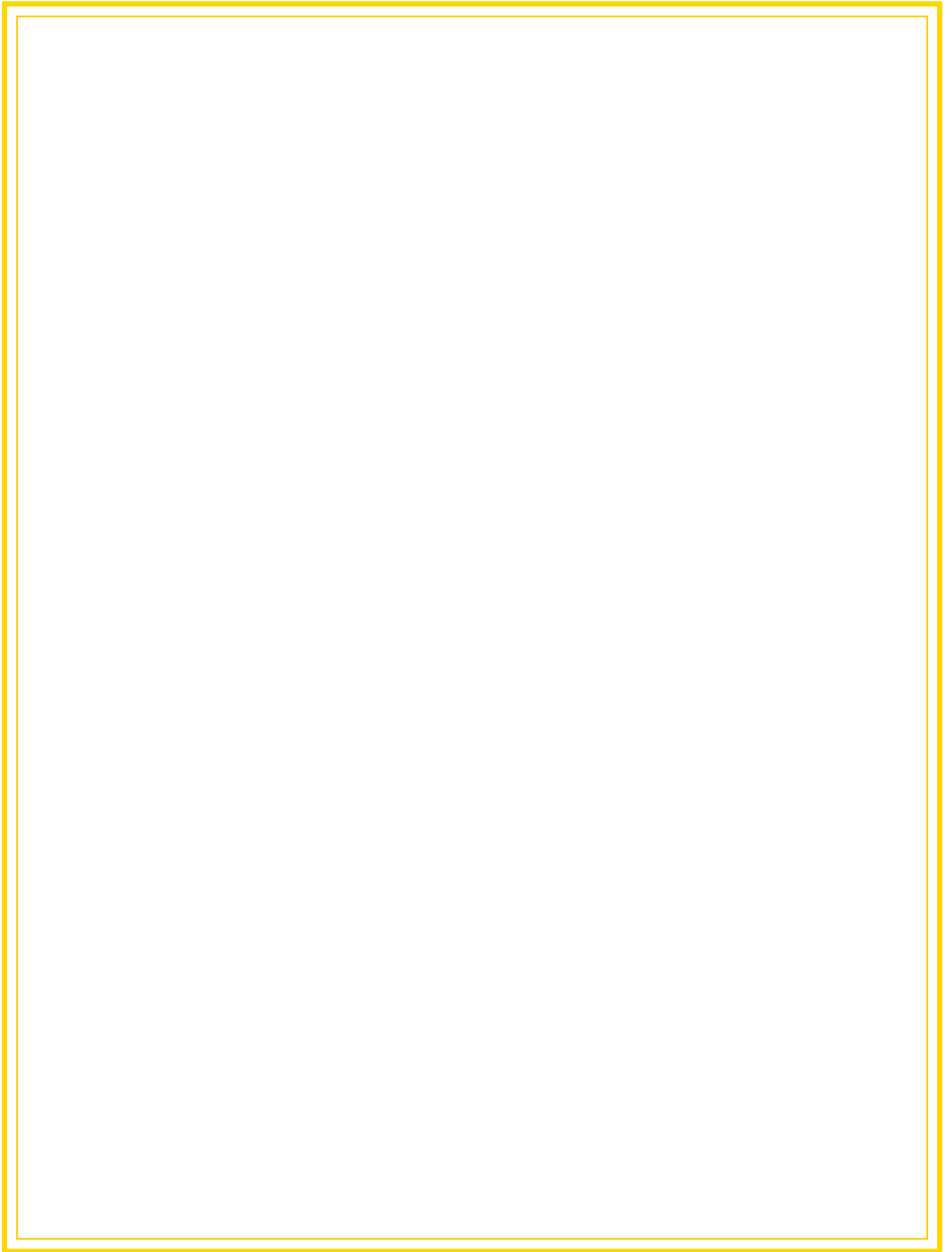


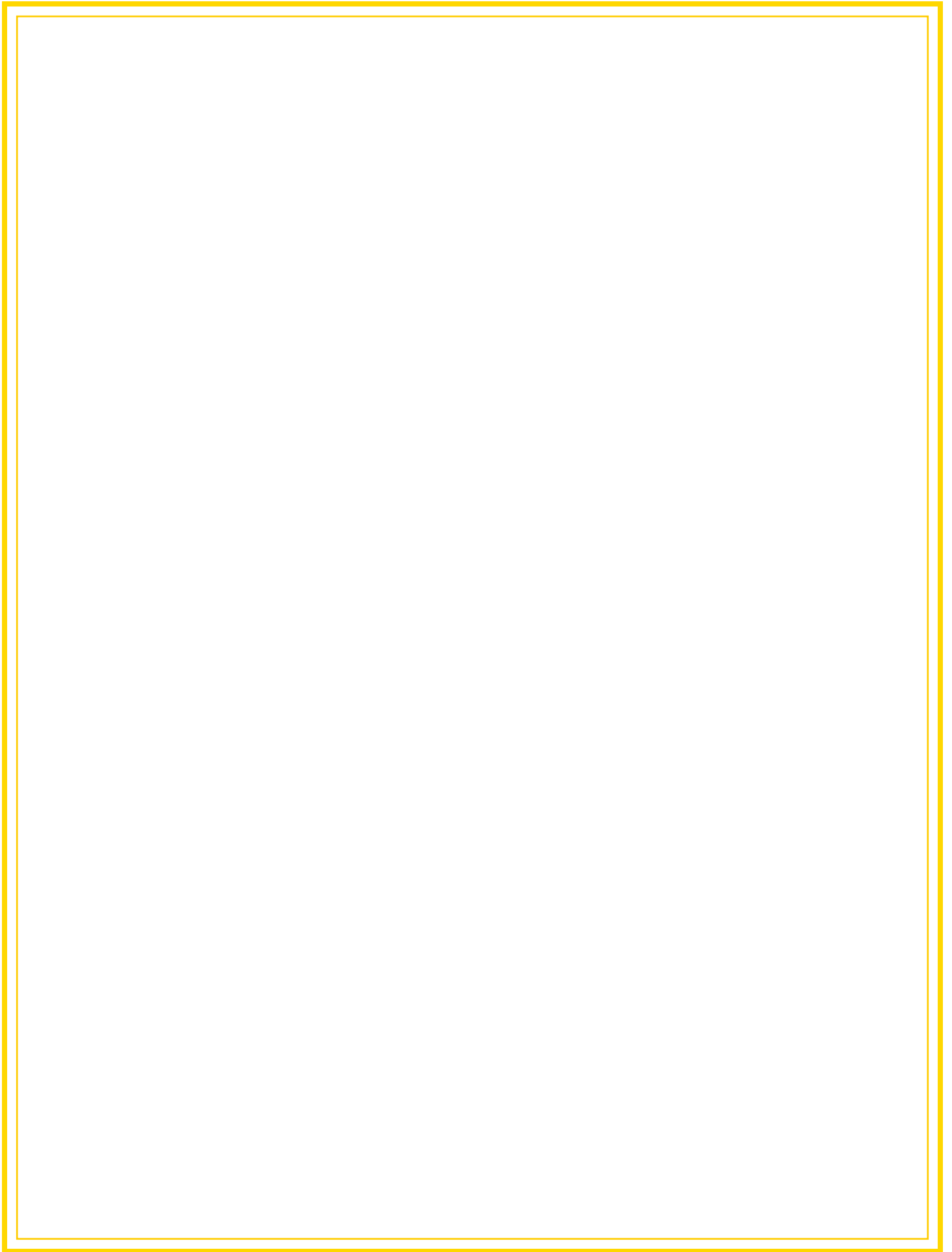


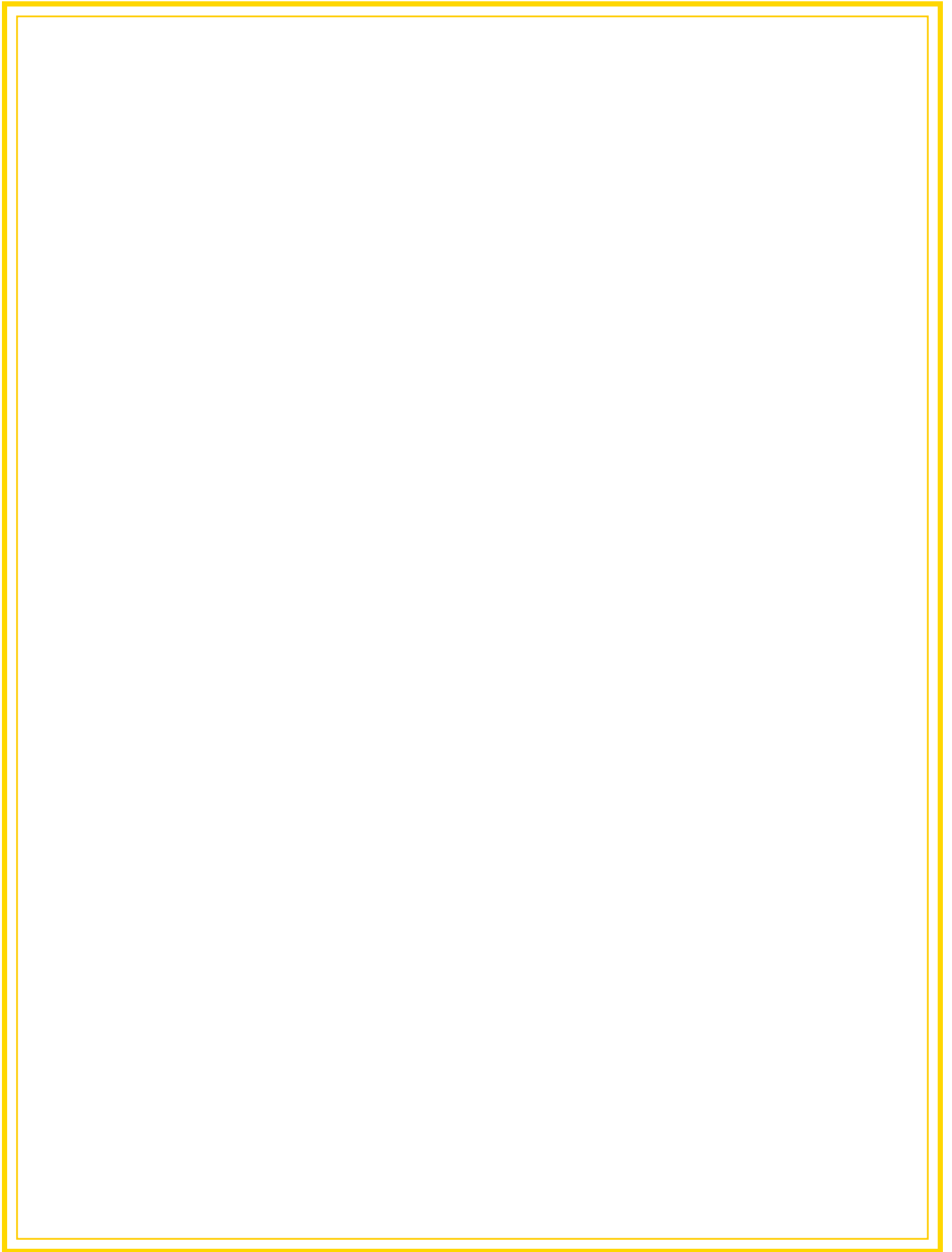


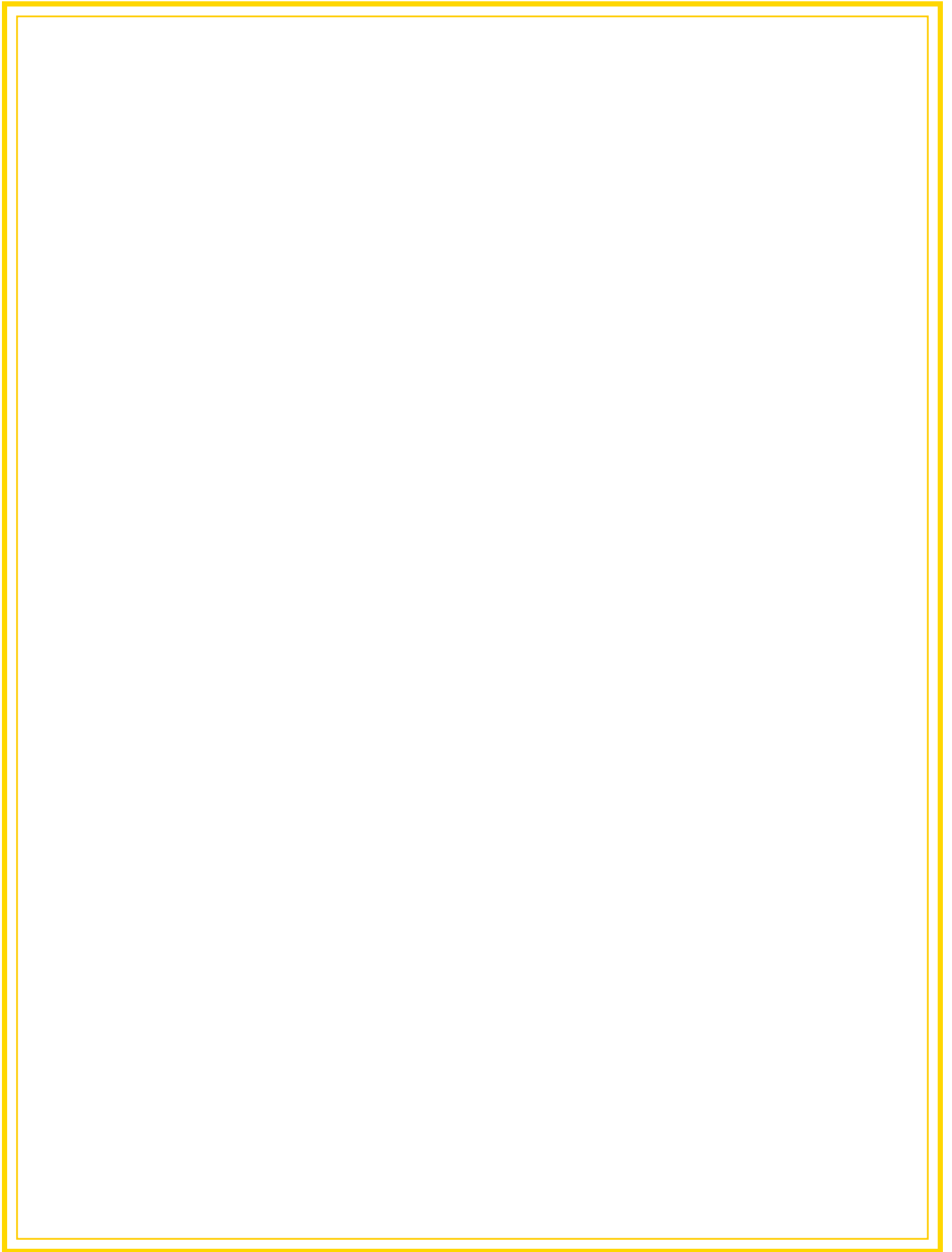


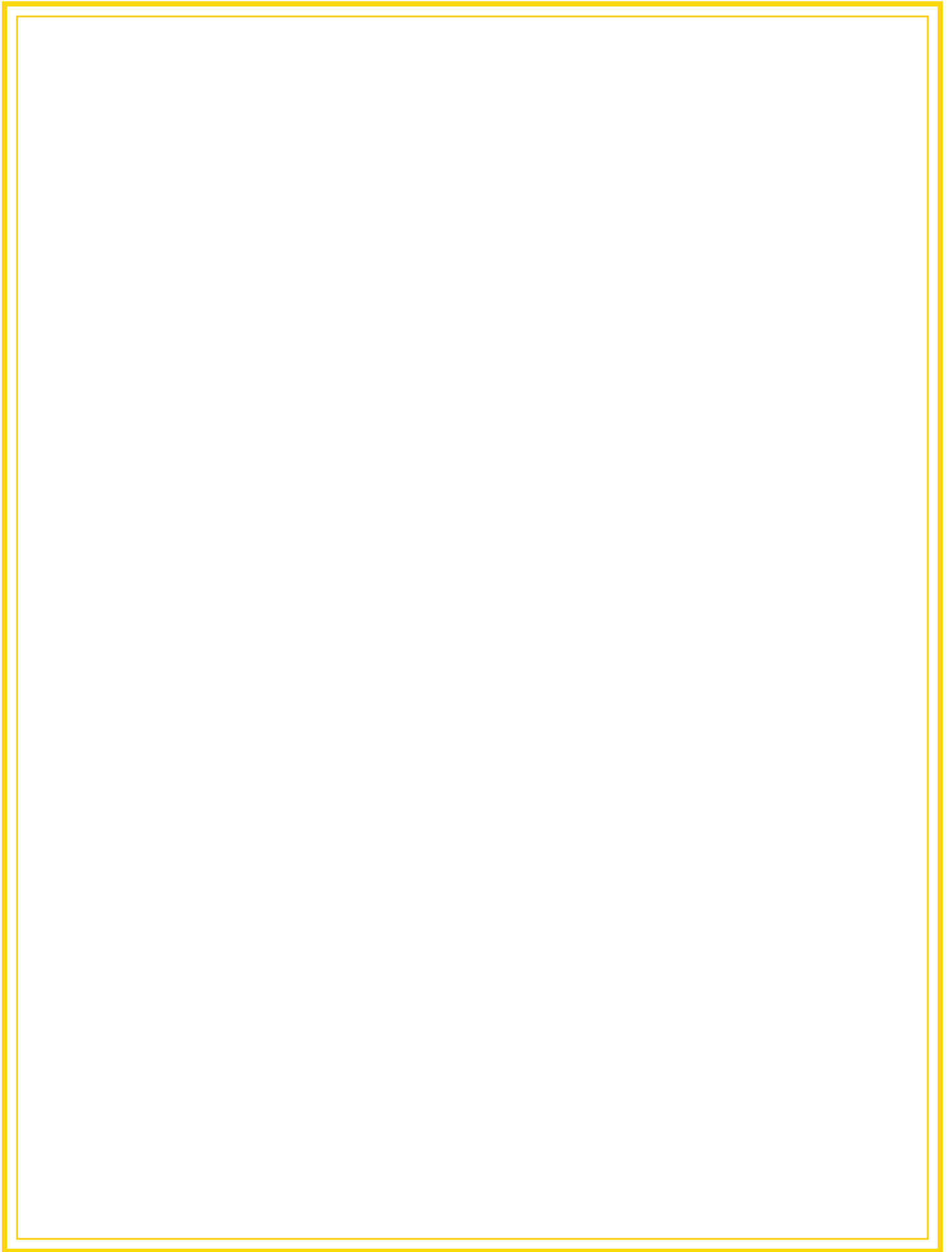


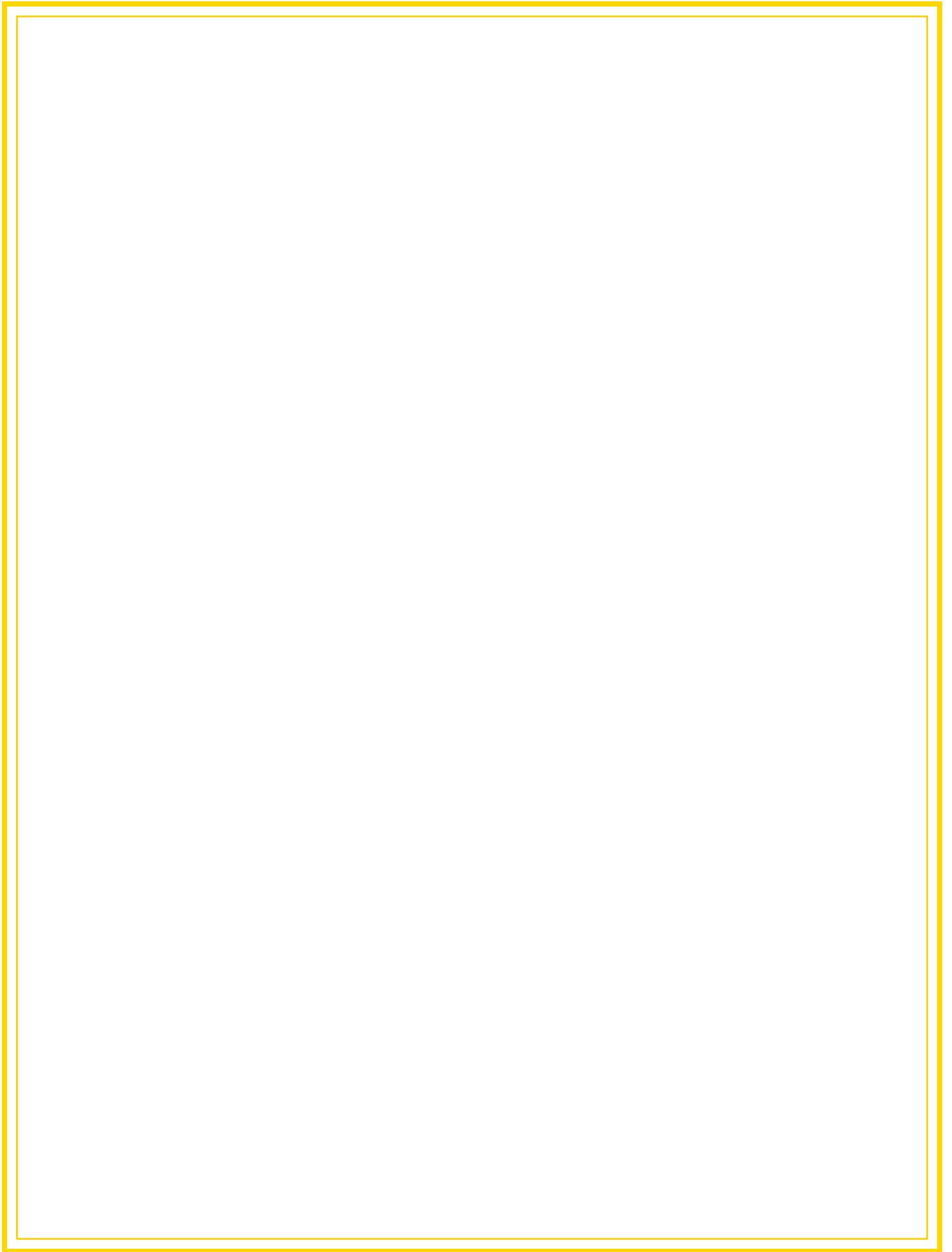


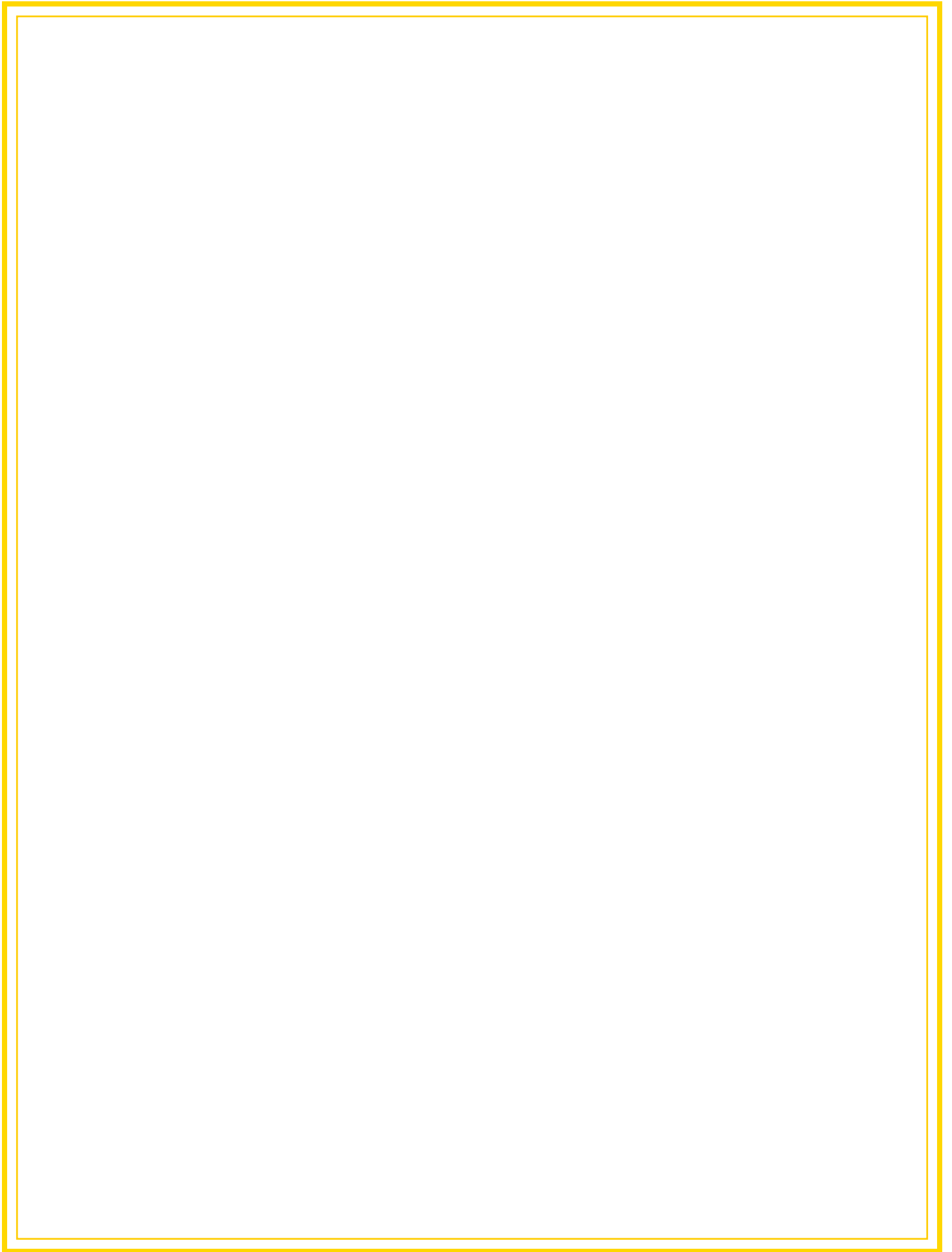


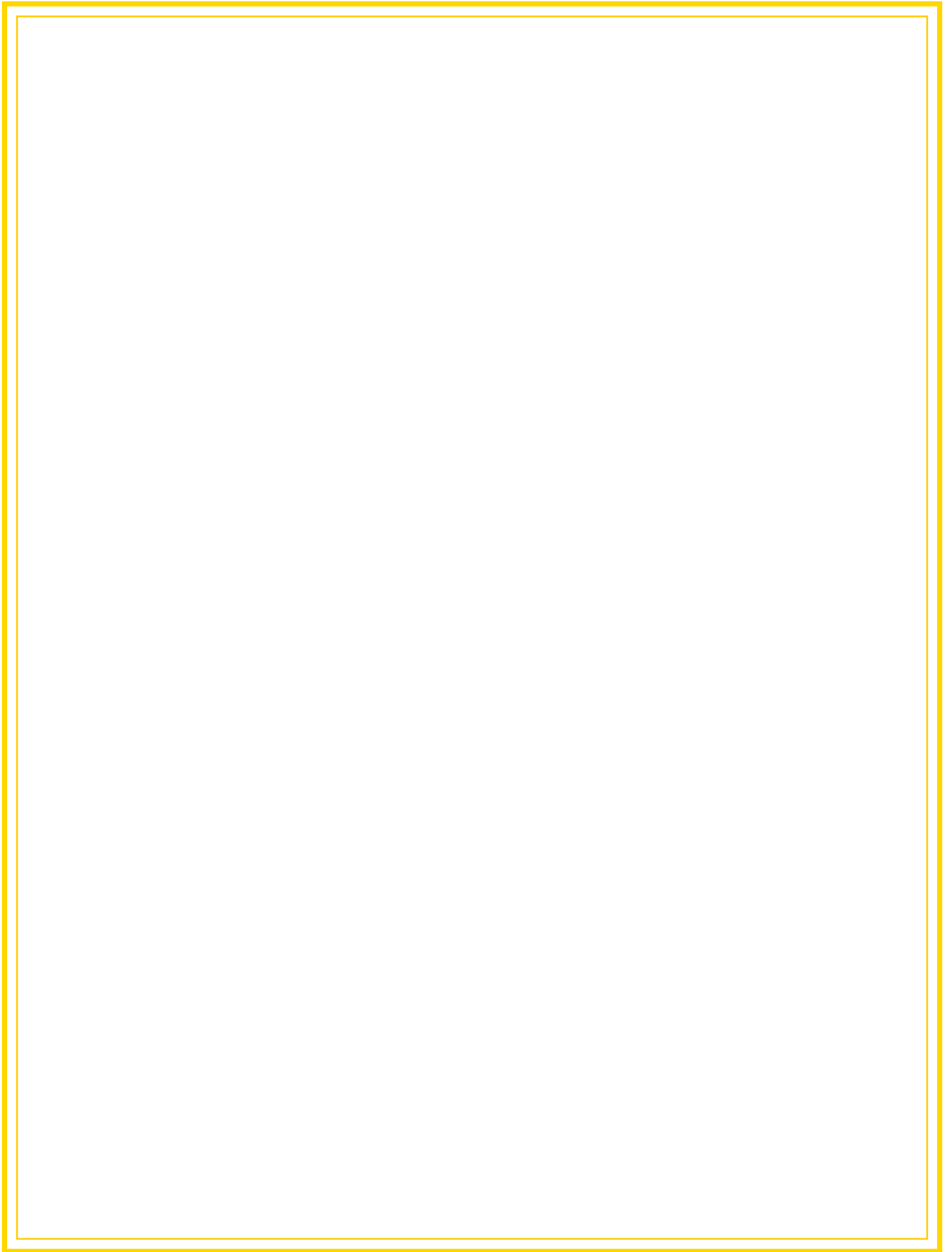


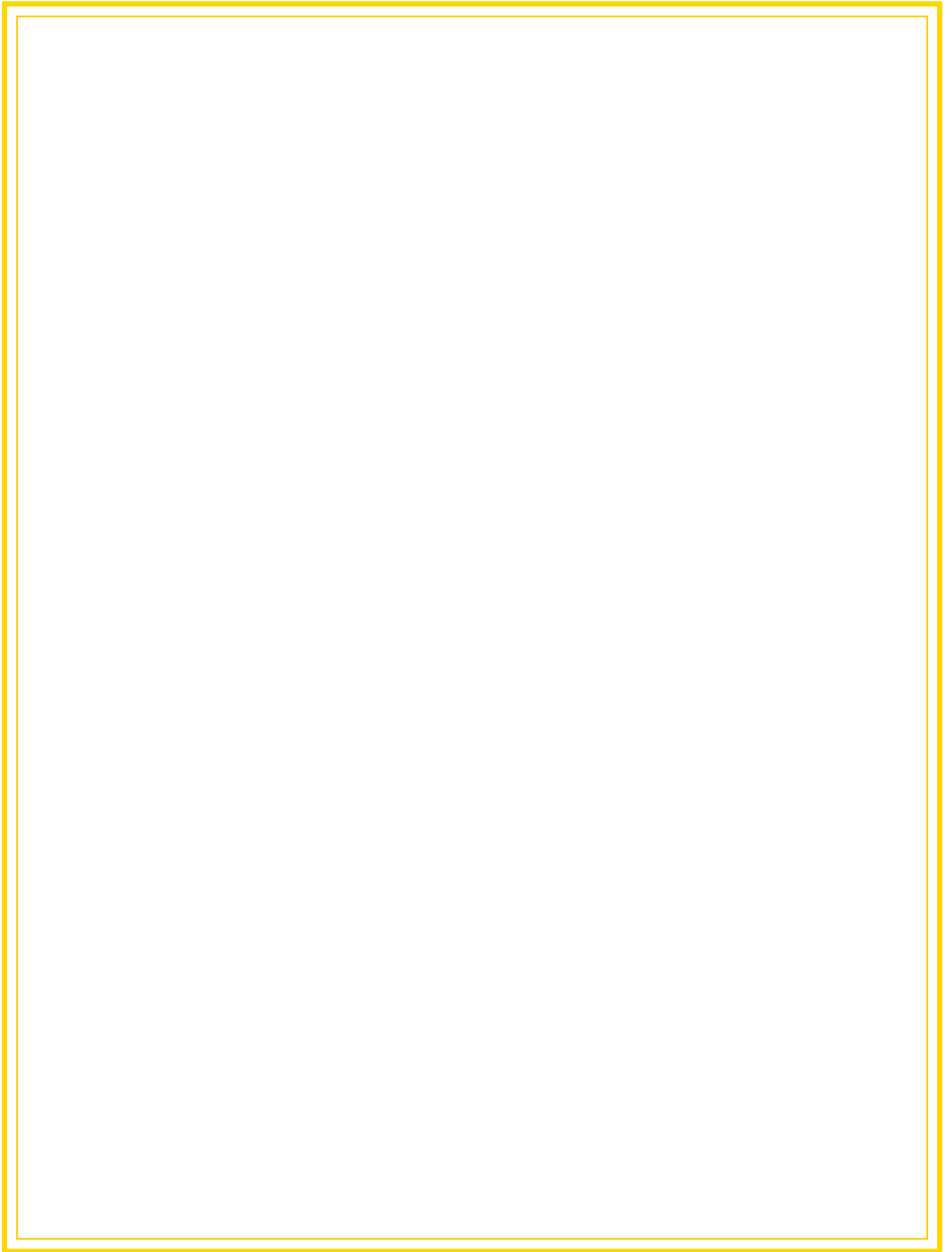


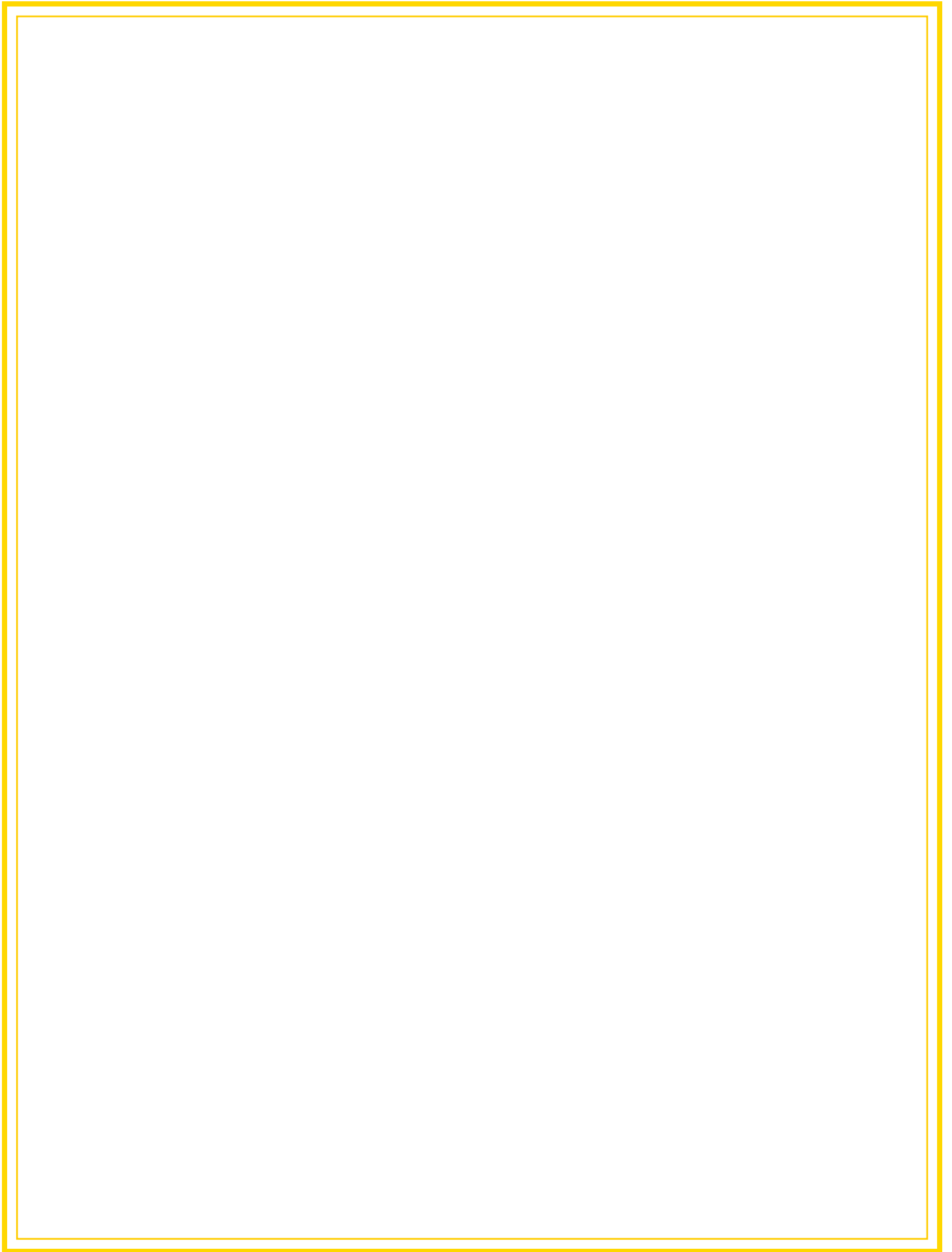


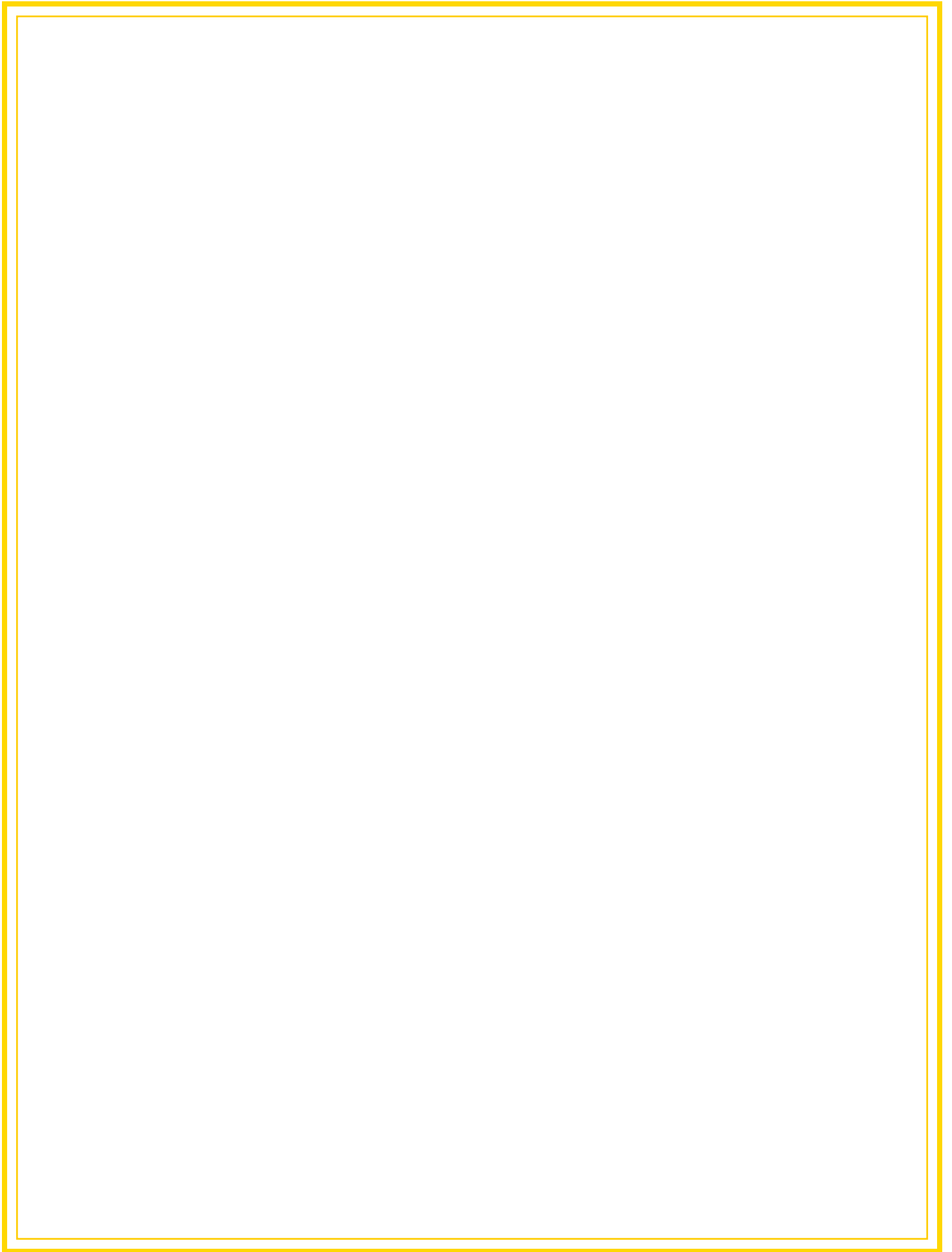


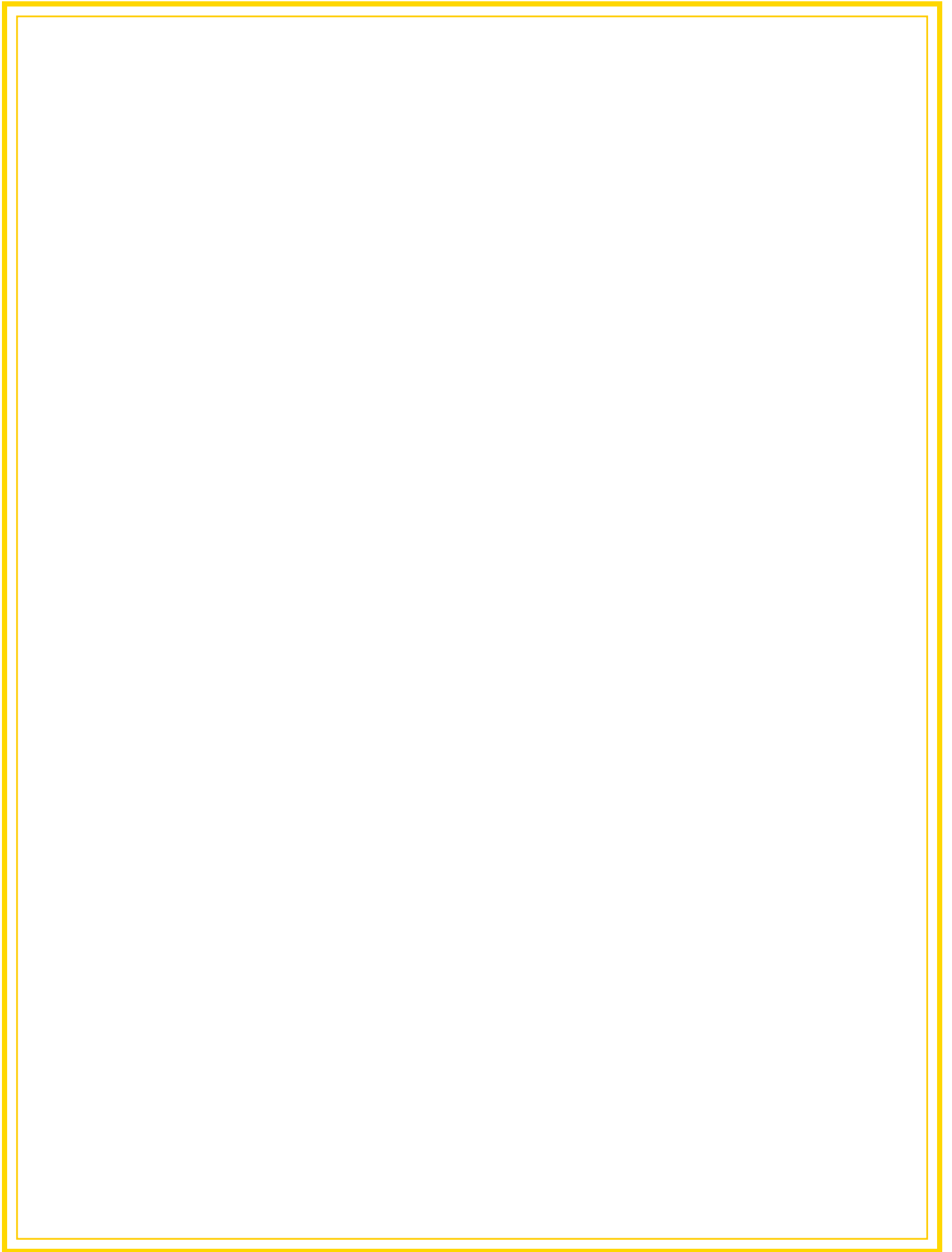


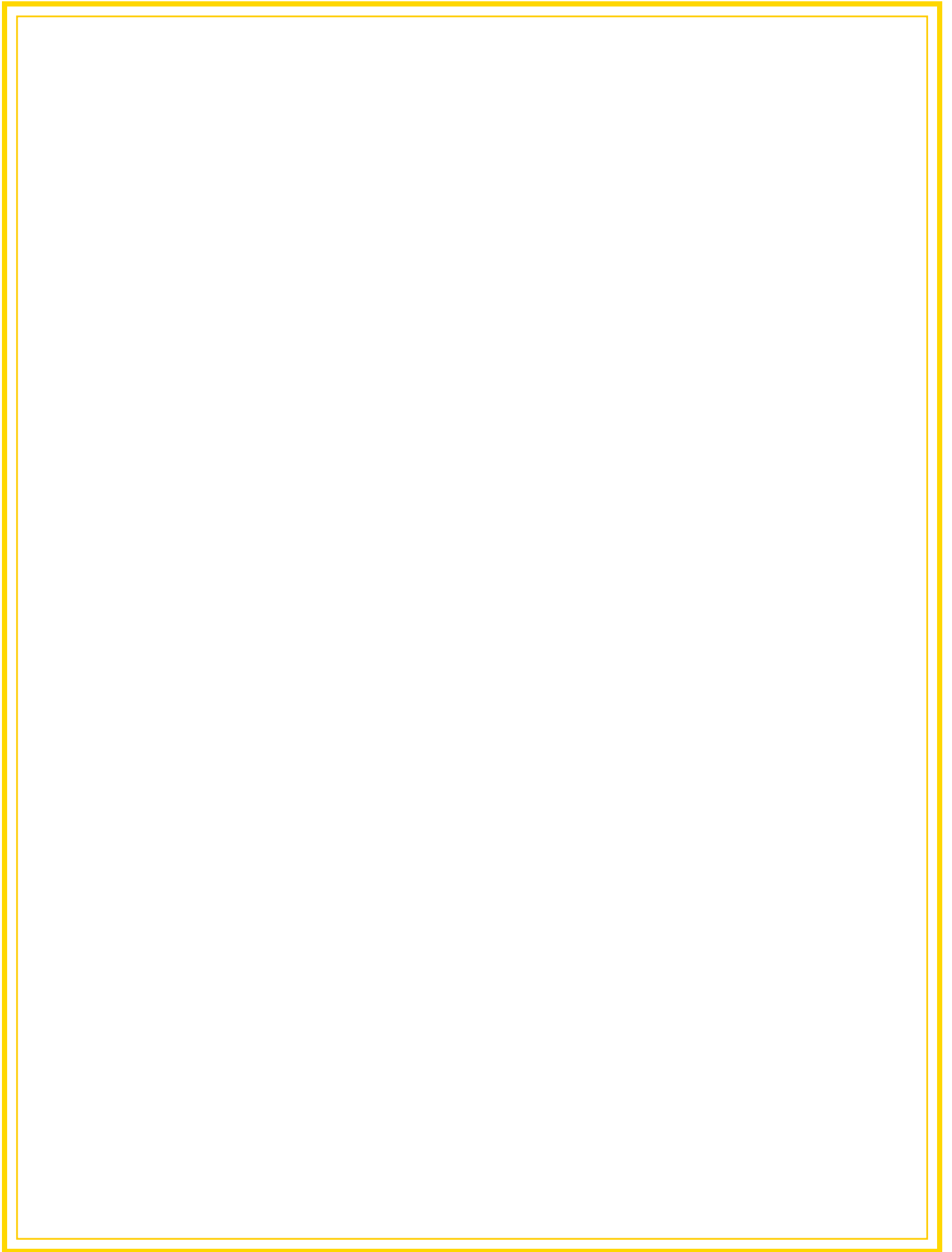


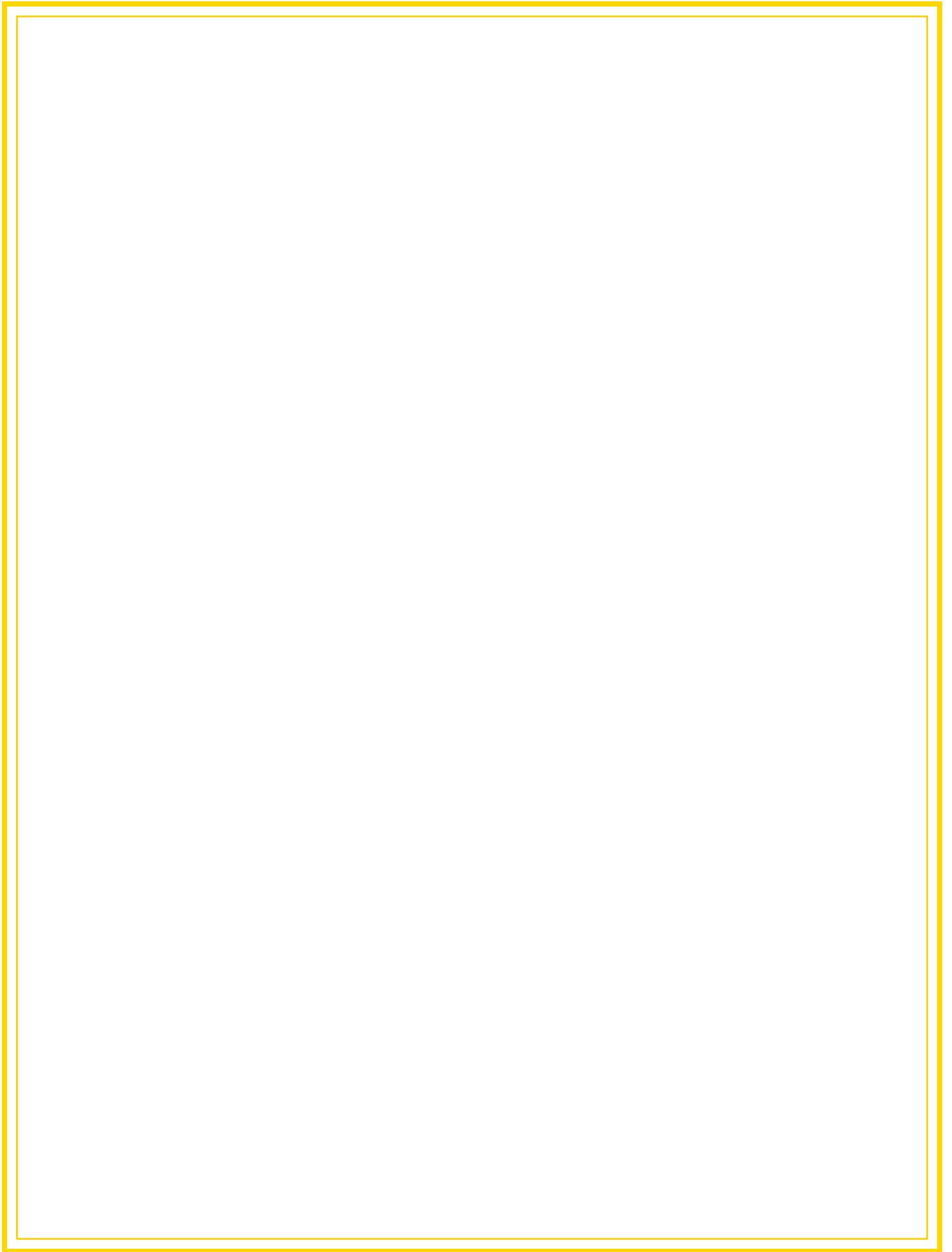


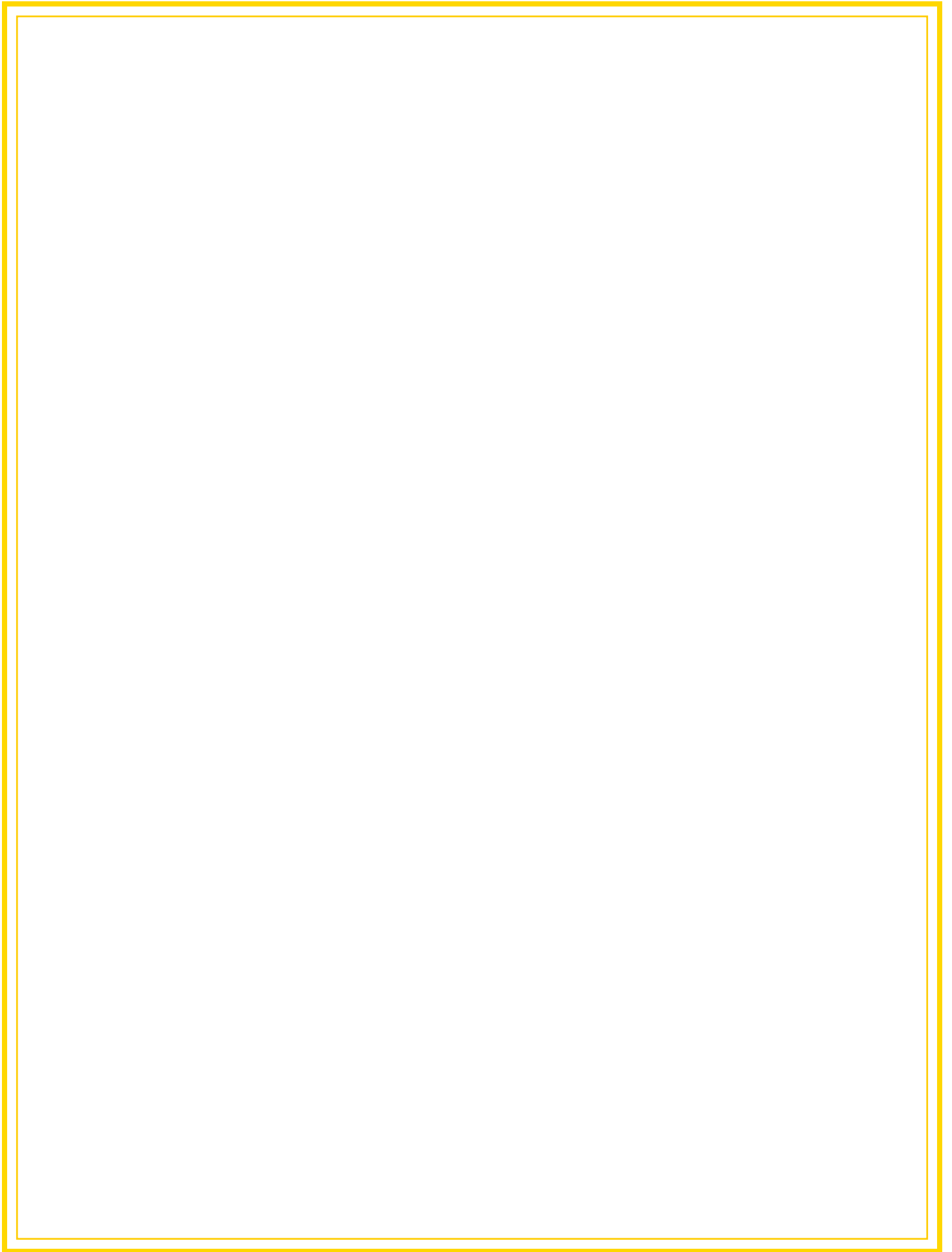


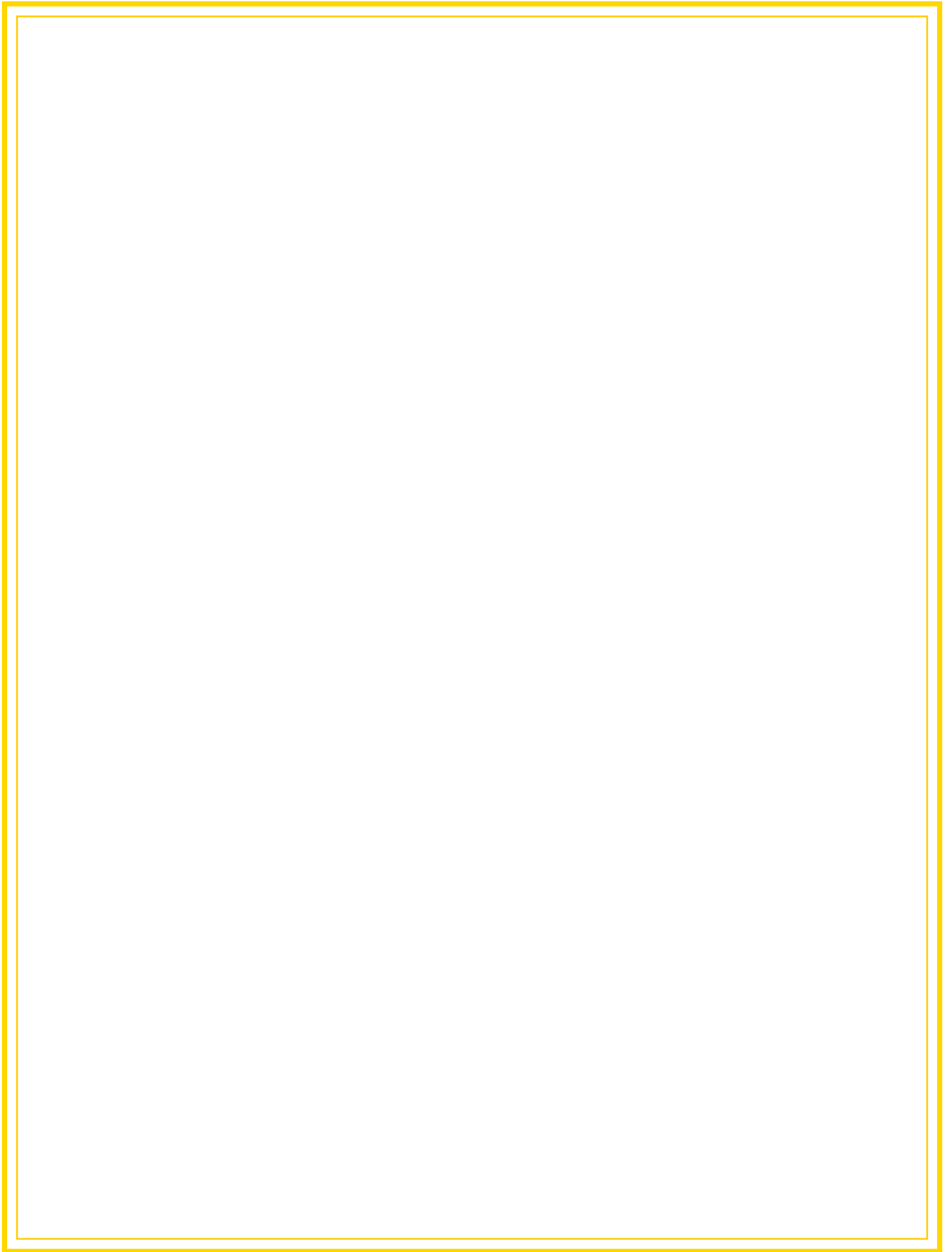


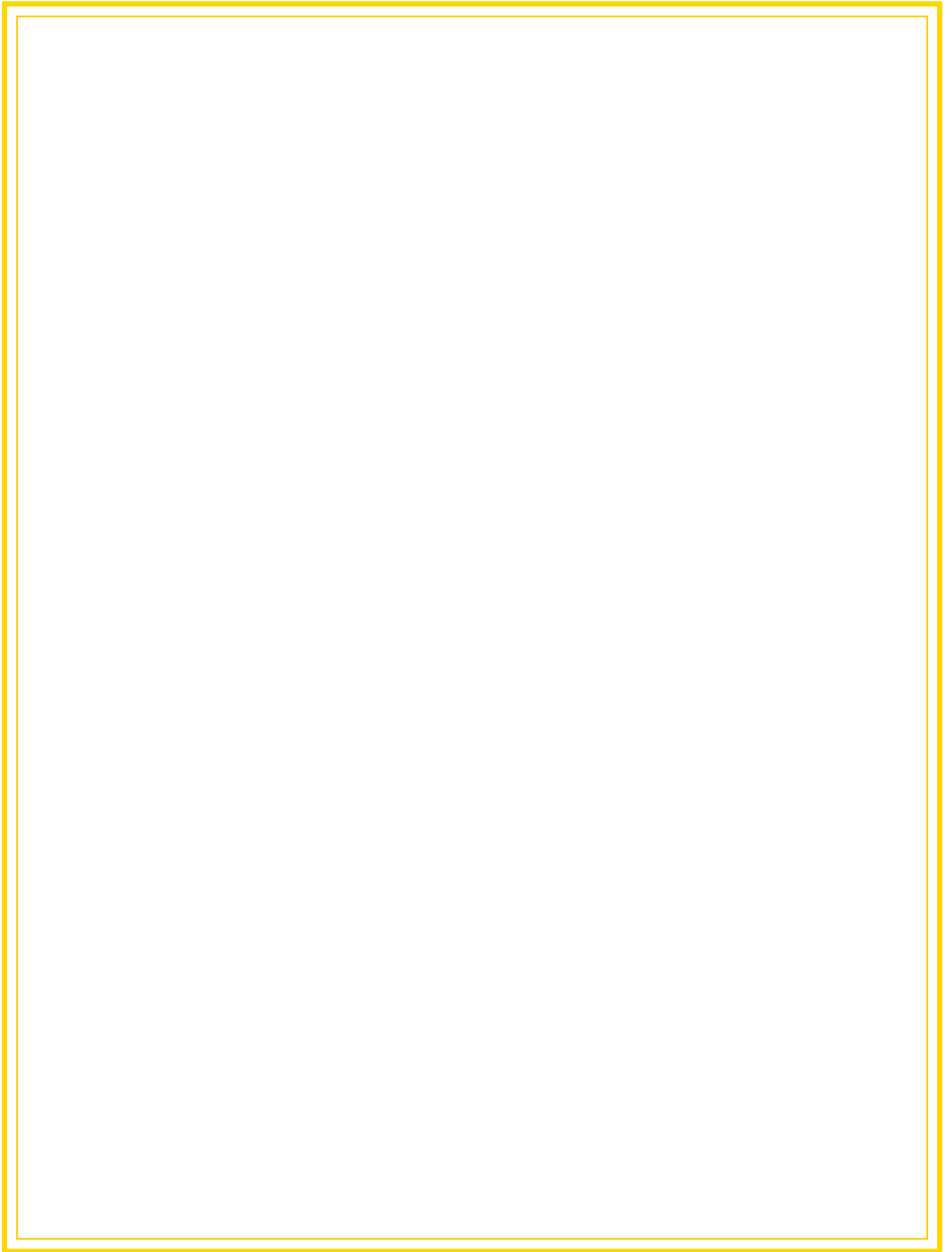


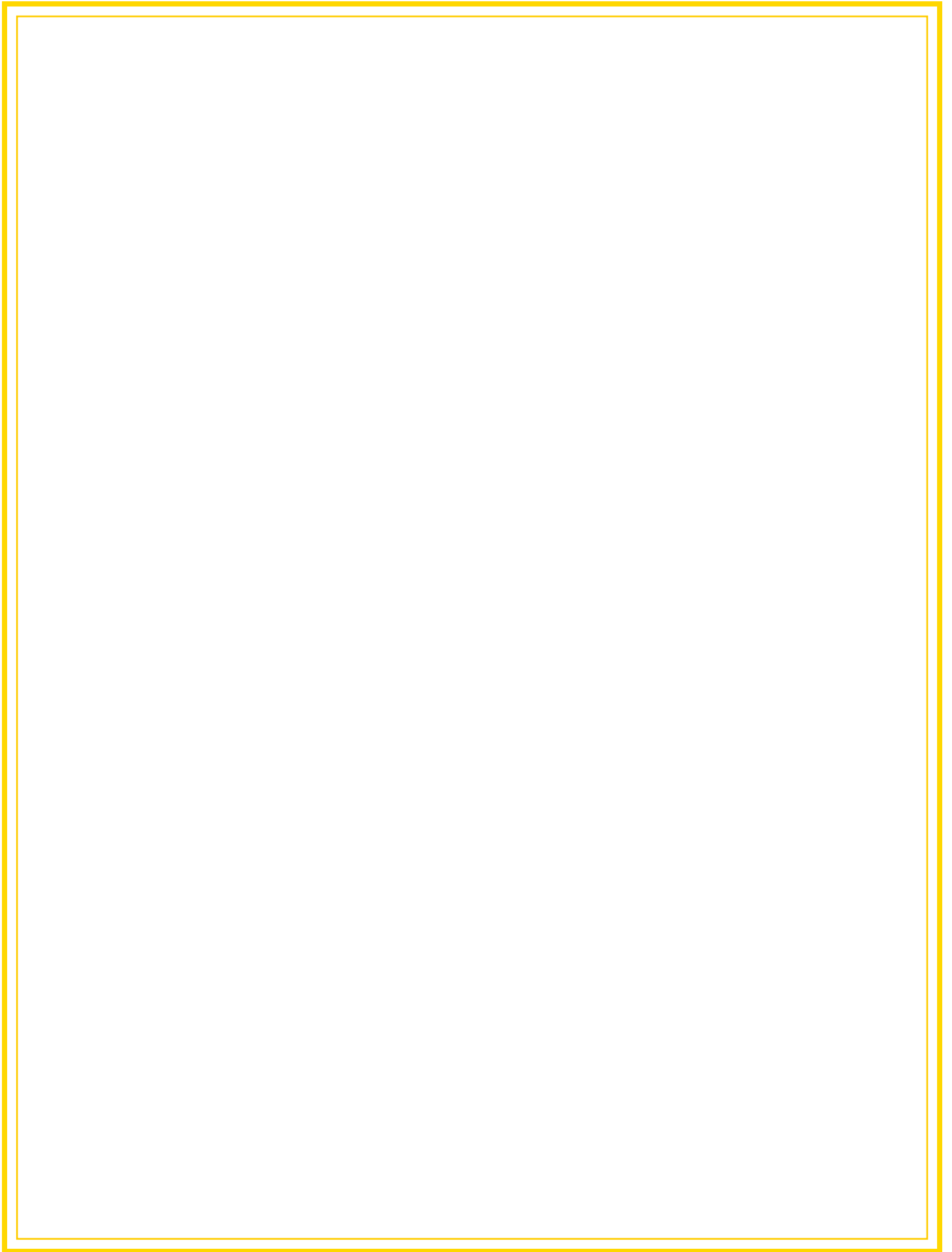


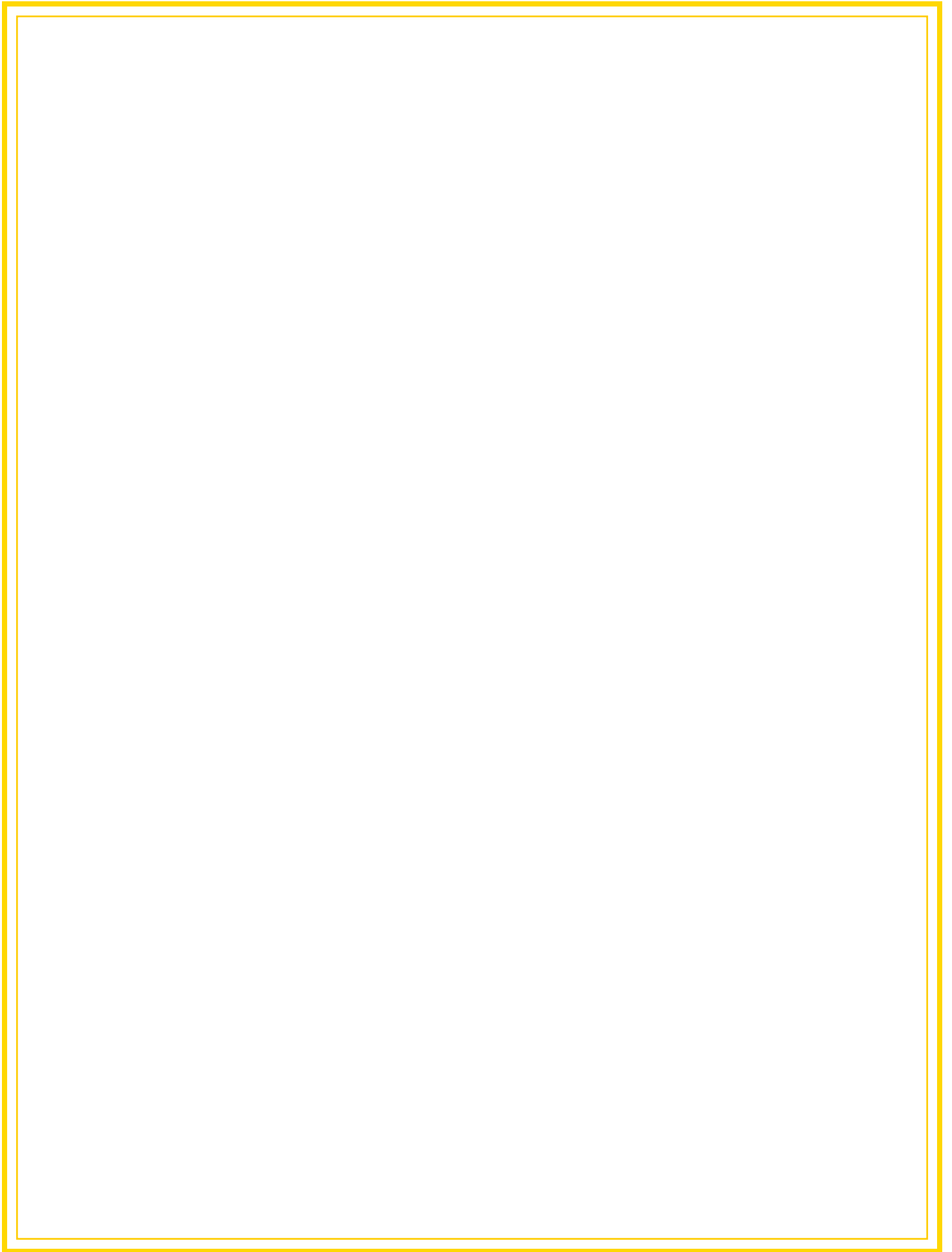


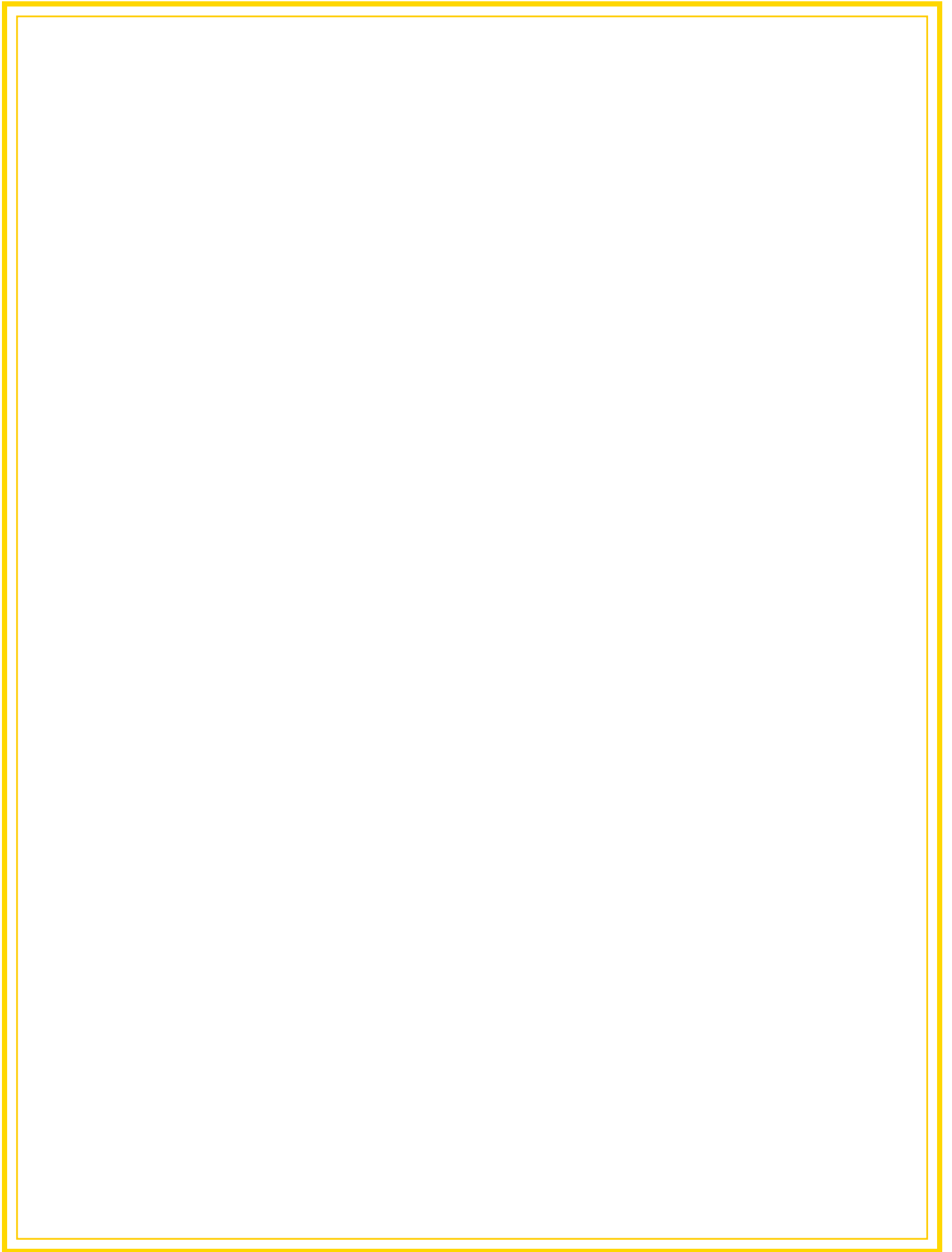


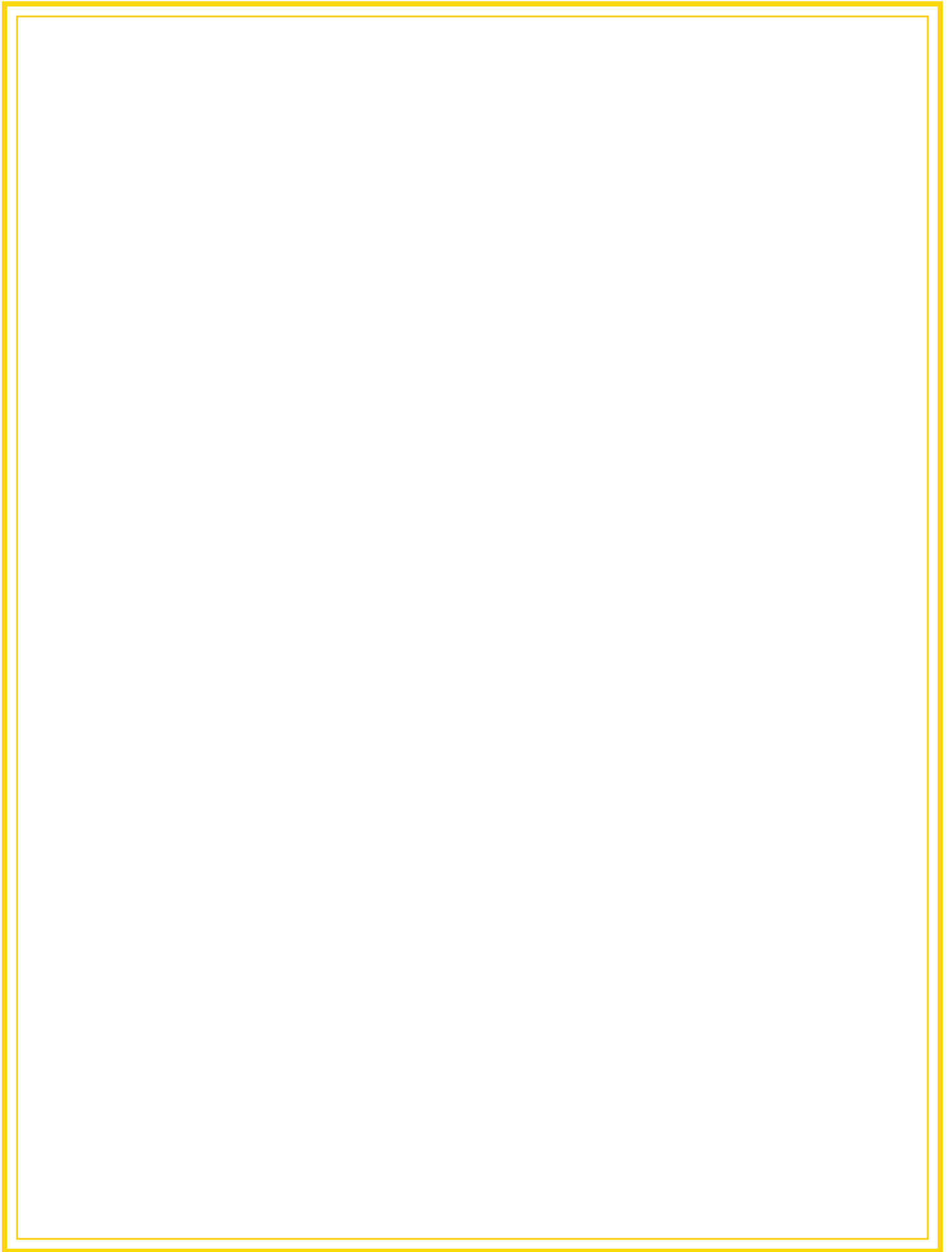


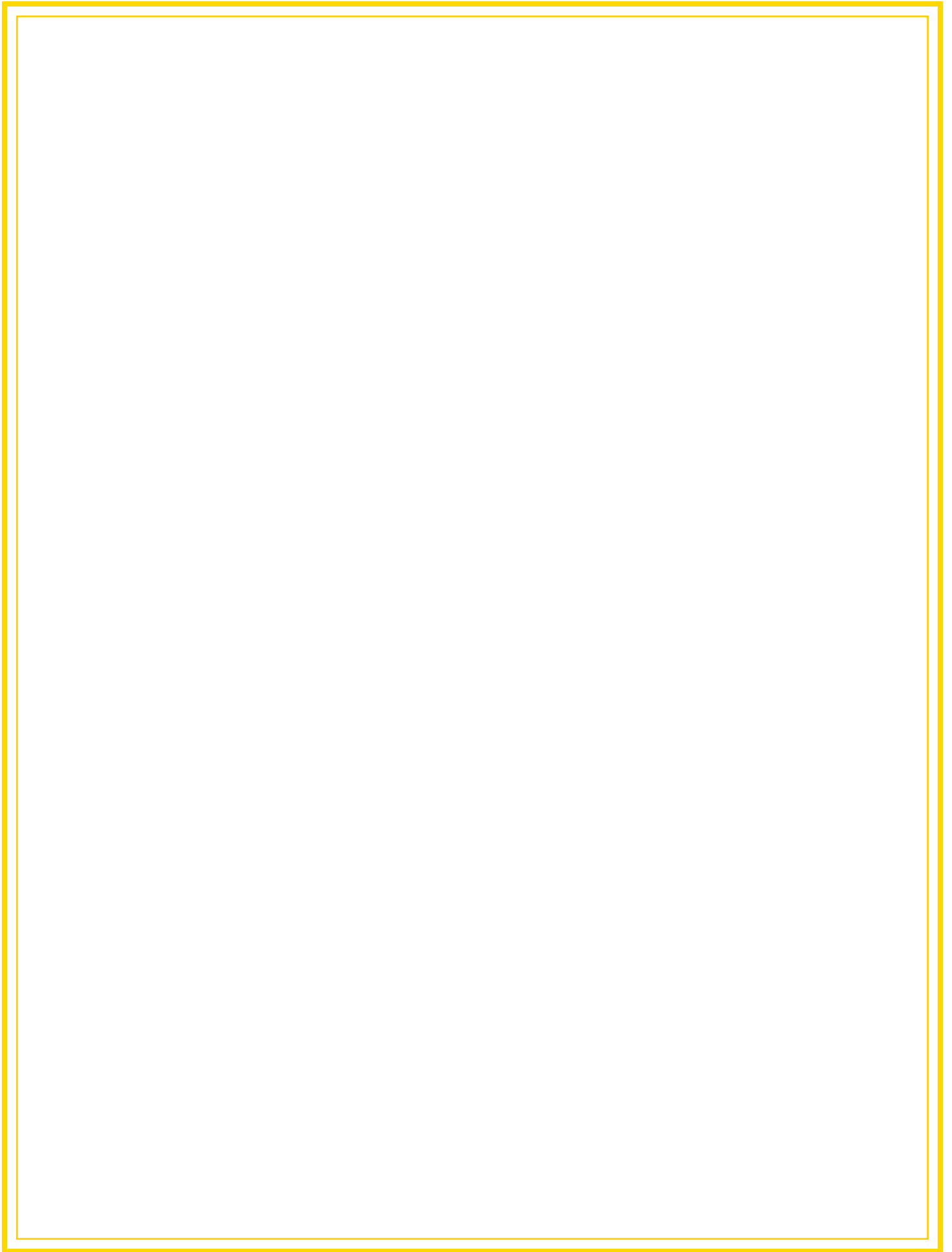


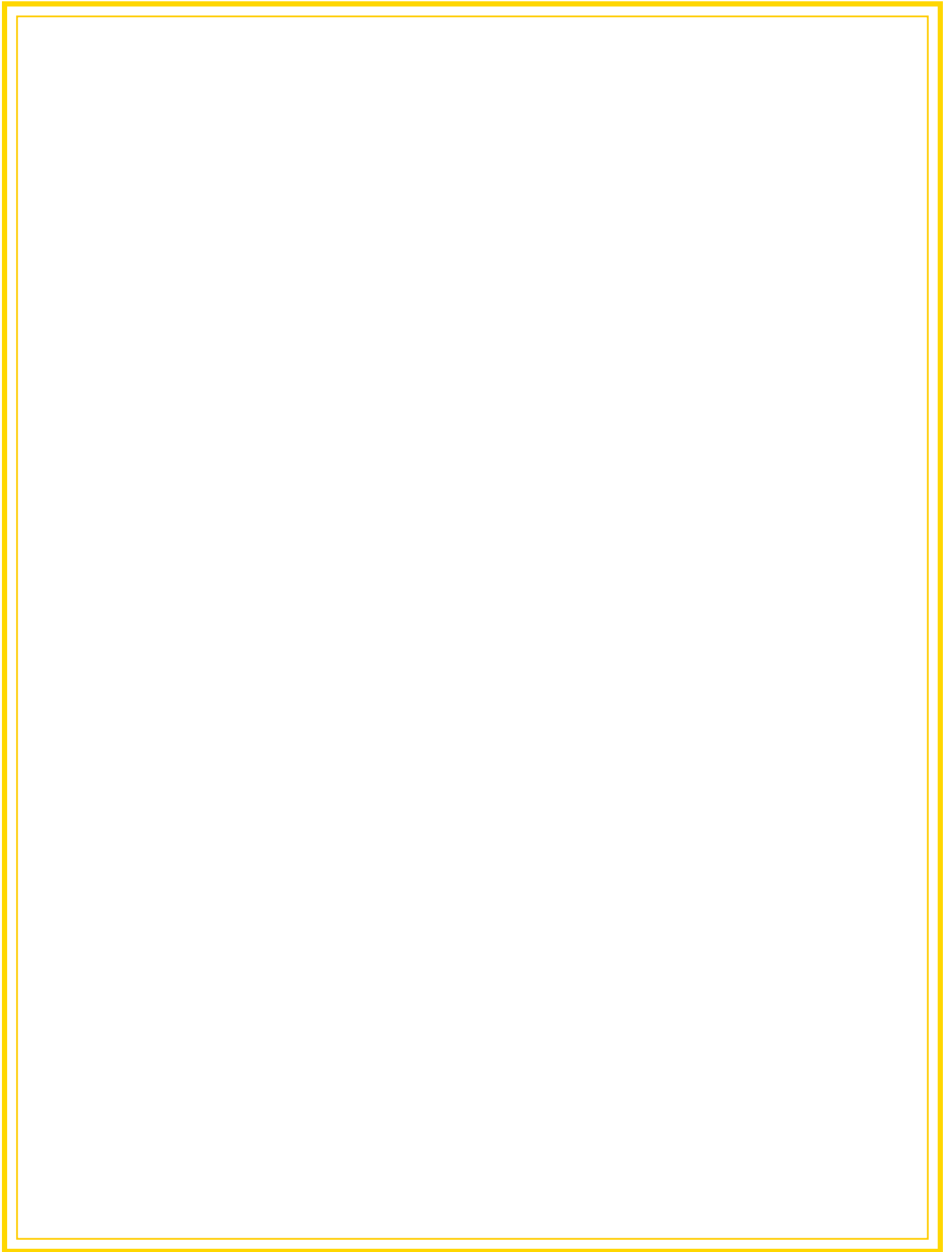












HERMETIC ASTROLOGY

THE PRECESSION CYCLES OF THE FIXED STARS AND INDIVIDUAL AND WORLD EVENTS

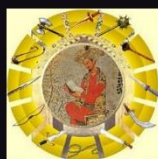
True Hermetic astrology is not that which deals with reincarnation or other unprovable things. The goal of the Hermeticist is to discover the secret ties that bind earthly aspects both to each other and to their corresponding celestial counterparts.

The astrological techniques that we have inherited from tradition are not the most suitable for explaining and predicting events, because they actually only catch the last links in a chain of celestial causes that underlie them. In fact, the primary causes of all events are always found only in the Eighth Sphere, that is, in the heavens of the constellations and fixed stars.

This book summarizes the main results of the author's research in the field of Stellar Astrology. It begins with three essays illustrating the various astrological uses of methods based on the maximum and minimum declination reached by each star during the precession cycle. From Egyptian archaeoastronomy to world and individual astrology, it will show how and why these star stopping points - whose astrological efficacy lasts some 26,000 years - can be activated at any time by other stars or planets. The geometric patterns formed by the stars at their lower and upper stopping points and their subsequent activations represent the true and hidden root cause of most events, and not only world events.

There are also other essays in which the techniques of Stellar Astrology are applied to Local Space Astrology, Medical Astrology, and also to the platonic concept of the Mother Star.

The last two essays solve the age-old problem of the longitude of places on a stellar basis. In particular, it is the cycle of the brightest star in the sky: Sirius. We will see how and why the meridian passing through the Great Pyramid of Giza must be considered the fundamental meridian, and we will also explain why this has much to do with the precession cycle of Sirius, which was perfectly limit star at Giza when it reached its minimum declination. But above all we will explain how to use this discovery in astrological practice.



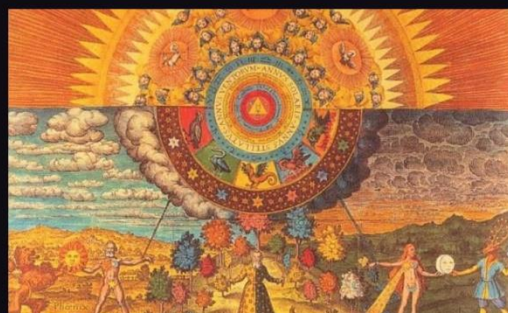
Giacomo Albano is a specialist in Stellar Astrology, Horary and Electional Astrology and Astrological Magic. Among his latest publications we mention "Every man is a star. In search of our Mother Star: the identification of the stellar signifiers in a birth chart", "Advanced Stellar Astrology", "Medical Stellar Astrology", "Initiatory astrology", "Mundane Stellar Astrology", "Magia astrale e talismani", "Le stelle beheniane tra magia e astrologia", "Le immagini stellate nel tema natale", "La Costellazione Generatrice e la Stella Madre", "Astronomia Sacra", "Le previsioni mondiali con l'astrologia stellare", "Astrologia iniziatica", "La Matrix Stellare". His website is www.astrologiaprevisionale.net

Giacomo Albano

HERMETIC ASTROLOGY

THE PRECESSION CYCLES OF THE FIXED STARS AND INDIVIDUAL AND WORLD EVENTS

Giacomo Albano



VIDEO

For some strange reason, the astrological techniques that we have inherited from tradition are not the most suitable for explaining and predicting events, because they actually only catch the last links in a chain of celestial causes that underlie them. In fact, the primary causes of all events are always found only in the Eighth Sphere, that is, in the heavens of the constellations and fixed stars, as is normal according to traditional Aristotelian cosmology, which establishes a precise hierarchy among the heavens. Every event has, and can only have, its first cause in the highest Sphere, and therefore the seven planets can only activate and manifest stellar archetypes in a certain way. It is thus necessary to adapt the techniques to reflect this hierarchical order. In this way, forecasts can also become more accurate and reliable, and it also finally becomes possible to distinguish momentous events from minor ones. This book summarizes the main results of the author's research in the field of Stellar Astrology. It begins with three essays illustrating the various astrological uses of methods based on the maximum and minimum declination reached by each star during the precession cycle. From Egyptian archaeoastronomy to world and individual astrology, it will show how and why these star stopping points - whose astrological efficacy lasts some 26,000 years - can be activated at any time by other stars or planets. The geometric patterns formed by the stars at their lower and upper stopping points and their subsequent activations represent the true and hidden root cause of most events, and not only world events. The following essays explain the concepts of Generative Constellation, Mother Star and Manifestation Constellation. It is explained how to identify them in the birth chart and how to use them in astrological practice. The clearest formulation of the concept of the Mother Star is found in Plato, who states in the *Timaeus* that the Demiurge created a number of souls equal to the number of stars and distributed them, each soul in its own star. Another lengthy essay is devoted to the application of Star Astrology techniques in the medical field. It summarizes the concepts explained more fully in my book *Medical Stellar Astrology*. Careful observation shows that even antiscia between a planet and a star, and even those between two stars, have significant astrological effects. In world astrology they are often decisive in explaining the various events of history in the light of the Fixed Stars. Indeed, important events usually take place when an antiscion between two stars is perfected. The same is true when two stars perfect an equidistance based on their right ascension (and not on their longitude) from the solstitial or equinoctial colure. I then dedicated an important essay to the uses of these methods, showing how these perfect equidistances by longitude or right ascension represent other important hidden factors of not only world events but also individual ones. In another article, I present some techniques aimed at perfecting traditional local space astrology and making it a very efficient and helpful tool with extraordinary applications, especially from an elective point of view. All these techniques can be applied to both the natal chart and the solar returns. They are made possible by the use of software such as *Stellarium* and *Google Earth Pro*. One of the novelties lies in considering not only the position of the stars and planets at the time of birth, but also their azimuth of rising and setting on the day of birth. Another new development is the use of the Encadrements technique. Just as in traditional astrology events are indicated by aspects between the stars, in local space astrology some equidistance combinations are very effective: they concentrate the combined influence of some stars on a particular direction. This procedure is similar to that of encadrement based on equidistance: it is necessary for the three stars to be equidistant from each other in azimuth. Among the most powerful of these encadrements are those formed with the azimuth of rising or setting of the Solstices or Lunistics. We then deal with magical angular distances, also very significant in this new astrology of local space. This is followed by two essays that solve the age-old problem of the longitude of places on a stellar basis. We shall see that here again the stars are decisive and that the problem would be completely

unsolvable without taking into account their precession cycle. In particular, it is the cycle of the brightest star in the sky: Sirius. We will see how and why the meridian passing through the Great Pyramid of Giza must be considered the fundamental meridian, and we will also explain why this has much to do with the precession cycle of Sirius, which was perfectly limit star at Giza when it reached its minimum declination. However, there is more than just a stellar factor, because the erection of this monument, which is the only one of the seven wonders of the ancient world still standing, and which has remained the tallest building in the world for millennia, also contributed decisively to making the Meridian fundamental, the one passing through the Great Pyramid. It should be remembered that the ancient monuments, and particularly the Egyptian ones, were not mere works of embellishment or celebration of the earthly might of Pharaoh or any other king. They served precisely to establish on earth an abode for heavenly forces and to create very definite connections between heaven and earth. So they had a very definite magical effect. In these essays devoted to the Giza meridian, we will enrich our stellar techniques with two new methods that use this fundamental meridian in the astrology of local space, both world and individual. Another essay is devoted to what I call the "Great Encadrement by Declination," because it involves some of the brightest stars in the firmament. Also making this stellar scheme of supreme importance is the fact that all the stars in question are at the declination values of 30, 60 and 90 degrees, i.e., the "sacred" angles of Pythagoreanism that are the basis for constructing the main types of regular triangles, and all of which are divisors of 360. There is then an essay in which we explain the astronomical significance of the six-pointed star, also known as the Star of David or Solomon's seal. We will see that the Star of David is also, literally, a very specific star, which in Jewish tradition is the symbol of the house of David and the tribe of Judah. We will look at what are the astronomical peculiarities of this star in Jerusalem when it was at its lowest stopping point (lowest declination). And finally the fundamental essay in which we explain what a Stargate is and how it opens from an astrological point of view. These are channels of communication between heaven and earth, some of them universal, others individual. We could define an individual Stargate as a particular point in time and space where our illusory perception based on the five senses and the most common associations of ideas takes a step back and allows us to perceive things in a different way. This happens on the one hand because of the occurrence of a series of particularly perfect stellar and planetary geometries, that is, because of a certain "magical" combination of stars and planets that are also among the strongest and most effective stars in its individual Microcosm. By studying these exceptional cases in this essay, the astrological conditions that favor these kinds of events are recognized. And, of course, once they are identified, you can act in your election to prepare everything in the best possible way. If you practice an analytical and "hermetic" astrology such as the one outlined in my last books, you can understand with dazzling evidence that the stars are not limited to exert a generic influence on this earth, being rather a precise and accurate mirroring, down to the smallest details, of every earthly event. The goal of the Hermeticist is to discover the secret ties that bind earthly aspects both to each other and to their corresponding celestial counterparts. This book is dedicated to English-speaking readers who cannot directly access in Italian the much more extensive works I have devoted to each of these topics. It is my hope that the essays therein will be sufficient to stimulate research, reflection and further study of these subjects that lay the foundations of a new astrology, which is objectively able to provide an answer to everything that cannot be explained by ordinary techniques, whether classical or modern.

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by Denis Labouré

(translated from the French by Michael Edwards)

The Advent Of Astrology

Stars and planets, being the visible image of the gods, were consulted from remotest antiquity. Between the 18th and 15th centuries BCE priority was accorded to unusual phenomena, such as eclipses or the appearance of comets and shooting stars. In the beginning the diviners' judgements were concerned with the fate of the country.

Celestial omens were not applied to *individuals* until the very end of Babylonian civilisation, around the 5th, 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, when planetary positions at the moment of birth began to receive consideration in predicting events destined to occur during the course of existence (the earliest nativity so far discovered appears on a cuneiform tablet dating from 410 BCE).

In Alexandria, in Hellenised Egypt, astronomers, Neo-Platonic philosophers and Hermeticists systematised and developed this hitherto fragmentary *genethliacal* astrology (from Greek *genethle*: birth). To the original Babylonian astrology, preoccupied with the planets' movements and positions in the zodiacal constellations, they added further doctrines, such as our so-called *houses* and *aspects*. Thus was born Greek astrology, which embarked on its triumphal march across the world, spreading from the Roman Empire as far as the Indian subcontinent.

But what was the source of genethliacal astrology's power of attraction? Why was it accepted throughout the entire known world, to the point of eclipsing in the minds of our contemporaries the ancient forms of Urania's art?

Chaldean Theology

The basic doctrine of genethliacal astrology rests for the most part on an astral theology attributed to the Babylonians (though in fact largely developed by the Graeco-Romans), transmitted to Rome by Julian the Chaldean¹ and his son, Julian the Theurgist, during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE). Both were authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*, teachings adopted by the Neo-Platonic philosophers, notably Porphyry and Iamblichus (3rd and 4th centuries CE). The aphorisms of the *Chaldean Oracles* have since been reconstituted from commentaries and quotations made by early pagan and Christian authors.

According to Chaldean teaching:

- - The planetary spheres were conceived as a series of concentric spheres extending as far as the sphere of the zodiac of fixed stars, with the Earth held fast at the centre.
 - - Sublunary bodies (between the Earth and the Moon's orbit) are of mixed nature: they are formed of varying blends of the four ever-interchanging elements, earth, water, fire and air, and so are subject to generation and corruption.
 - - Bodies situated beyond the lunar orbit are, on the contrary, formed of pure fire or of a fifth quintessence whose designation (ether) derives from the unceasing motion of its essence (*tein aei*: ever running). It follows that all celestial bodies are incorruptible. With respect to the Earth, their ranking is defined by their period of revolution round the zodiac: the slower the star's motion, the further it is from the Earth. This supposition fixed the 'Chaldean Order' referred to from the 2nd century BCE onward.²
- Each of the spheres was presided over by a god, as listed below, starting from the first sphere encircling the Earth:
- - the sphere of the lunar goddess Hecate, described by the Moon's orbit;
 - - the sphere of Hermes, described by the planet Mercury's orbit round the sphere of the Moon;
 - - the sphere of Aphrodite, described by the planet Venus' orbit embracing the sphere of Mercury;
 - - the sphere of Apollo - that of the Sun - containing the spheres of the Moon, Mercury and Venus;
 - - the sphere of Ares (Mars);
 - - the sphere of Zeus (Jupiter);
 - - the sphere of Chronos (Saturn);
 - - lastly, the seven planetary spheres (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) were embraced by an eighth, the sphere of the fixed stars comprising the Zodiac;
 - - then came the spheres situated beyond the planets: the sphere of the gods who reside beyond the planetary spheres; the sphere of the Demiurge in charge of creation; and the sphere of the First Intelligence. Finally, beyond the universe thus far expounded, the Creator of the world, He Whom the *Chaldean Oracles* name 'Father'.³

¹ The word 'Chaldean' originally referred to the priestly caste of Babylon, but later designated their Greek and Egyptian disciples. The stamp of Greek philosophy and astronomy had much modified and developed the original Babylonian teaching.

² This is likewise the order followed by the rulers of the planetary hours, the rulers of the Egyptian decans (sometimes referred to as 'faces'), and the planets on the Tree of Life in the Jewish Kabbalah.

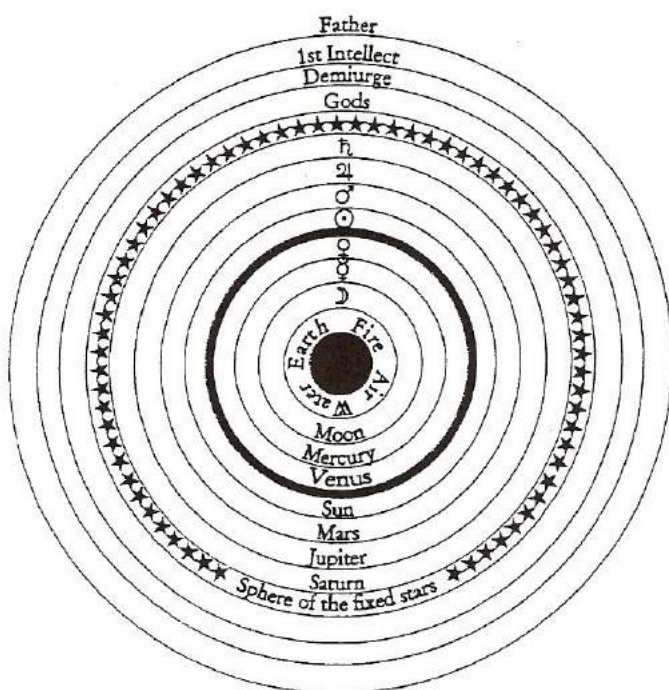
³ Metaphorically, the 'Creator' is the architect who designs the universe and whose plan, the 'First Intelligence', is followed by the

The Formulation Of This Vision Of The World

This system was long in maturing. The regularity of celestial revolutions led the Babylonians to deduce that these were the work of an ordering intelligence, hence they assimilated the stars to sidereal gods. Pythagoras had promulgated the doctrine of the perfection of the sphere which, he supposed, must be the natural form of the Earth and of the starry heaven. He therefore taught that the Earth was a sphere at rest at the centre of the world. Eudoxus of Cnidus (born c.408 BCE) formulated the theory of concentric, or more precisely, homocentric spheres. This system would later inspire the golden age of Scholasticism, and through the medium of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Aristotle had integrated the system of homocentric spheres into his *Physics*, endowing the hitherto purely geometric spheres with physical properties. This was inherited by the Greek astronomer and astrologer Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century CE). For him the planetary spheres were 'etheric shells' causing the planets to move along their orbits.

In apparent ignorance of its profound meaning and in firm adherence to the Aristotelian line, he expounded the system as an astronomical model and explained astrology in terms of 'celestial influences' with no religious or philosophic connotation. Thus, the theory according to which the Earth is at the centre of the universe, with the other planets revolving round it, formed the basis of the geocentric astronomical so-called 'Ptolemaic System'.

False on the physical plane, where Ptolemy stood, this system is 'true' from the symbolic point of view of the human geometric soul, in the sense that, from the very beginning, man on Earth has always seen the Moon and the planets revolving round him.



The universe according to the Chaldean Oracle

The Incarnation Of The Soul

In Chaldean theology the spheres were the worlds presided over by the planetary gods; worlds traversed by souls on their way to incarnation and on their ascension after death. In the dream of Scipio, which ends Book VI of his *De Republica*, Cicero explicitly states: 'To men is imparted a soul emanated from those eternal fires you call stars and luminaries which, round and spherical, quickened by divine spirits, perform their revolutions and perambulate their orbits with an admirable celerity.'

According to these teachings, the human soul lives in the celestial world. Then it enters the terrestrial world through conception and birth, acquiring a physical body. On its way to incarnation the soul traverses the planetary spheres, assuming a subtle, also known as 'astral', body⁴. Just as in earthly life the native will each day put on a series of garments, from light underclothes to heavy overcoat, so the incandescent flame of the human soul, in the course of its descent from its universe of origin into the terrestrial body, assumes a vesture formed of the substances of the spheres it traverses.

This astral body comprises 'virtues' (qualities and instincts) received from the planetary spheres traversed. Since this involves on one hand the planetary spheres, while on the other their traversal takes place outside time to end in birth into our terrestrial sphere, these qualities are reflected in the configuration of the planets at the moment of birth. Macrobius' *Commentary On The Dream Of Scipio* describes the descent through the planetary spheres thus:

"souls freed of all material contagion dwell in heaven; but those who, from this abode on high, where they are bathed in a light eternal, have cast a downward glance at bodies and at what is here below called life, and who have conceived for life a secret desire, are dragged little by little down toward the nether regions of the world, by nought but the weight of this earthbound thought. Yet no sudden fall is this, but by degrees. The soul, perfectly incorporeal, assumes not at once the gross mantle of corporeal clay, but imperceptibly, and through a chain of adulterations suffered one by one as it recedes from the pure and simple substance wherein once it dwelt, to gird and swell itself with substance of the planets. For, in each of the spheres placed beneath the heaven of fixed stars, it swathes itself in several layers of ethereal matter which, imperceptibly, form an intermediary bond by which it is united with the earthly body; so that it suffers as many degradations or as many deaths as spheres traversed." (Ch.XII)

The qualities acquired by the soul in the course of its descent through the spheres are thus described:

"and in its descent, not only does it [the soul] assume the aforesaid new sheath of matter from these luminous bodies, but it receives there the different faculties it must exercise throughout its sojourn in the body. From Saturn it acquires reason and understanding, or what is called the logical and contemplative faculty; from Jupiter it receives the power to act, or executive power; Mars gives it the valour required for enterprise, and a burning zeal; from the Sun it receives the senses and the power of invention,

⁴ 'Demiurge' in charge of building the universe.

that make it feel and imagine; Venus moves it with desires; from the sphere of Mercury it takes the power to express and enunciate what it thinks and feels; finally, from the sphere of the Moon, it acquires the strength needed to propagate by the generation and increase of bodies. This lunar sphere, which is last and lowest with respect to divine bodies, is first and highest with respect to earthly bodies. This lunar body, as it were the sediment of celestial matter, at the same time is found to be the purest substance of animal matter." (Ch.XII)

This teaching underlies the practice of genethliacal astrology as it was originally conceived. In the nativity the 'Chaldeans' saw a chart of the astral bodies, as the journey through the planetary spheres had structured them. Correctly interpreted, this chart would reveal the native's constituent parts, material or more subtle. It would speak of his daimon, the guardian angel who would accompany him on his voyage here below and watch over the fulfilment of his fate⁴. It would describe, therefore, the earthly existence which had devolved upon him.

The Ascension Of The Soul

The *Poimandres*, first treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, reveals what happens at death and after death. In order to return in pristine purity to the divine, the soul must effect a divestment, in reverse order, of the astral raiment it has donned. The soul first quits the material element encountered in the last place, namely the stuff of nature, that is the body furnished by nature. In the last place it quits the first material element encountered in its fall, namely the astral vestment of the highest sphere. Death entails a sequence of effects:

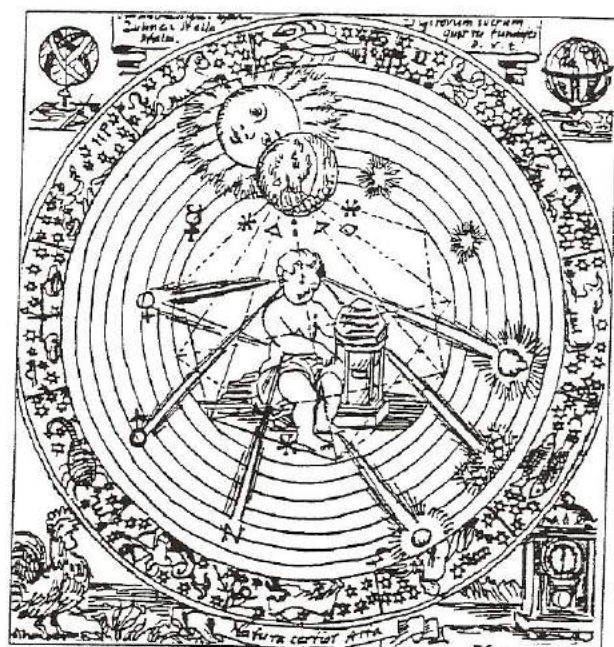
- - the body is consigned to dissolution, and the visible form disappears;
- - the temperament (subject in each case to the individual blend of the four elements), henceforth inert, is consigned to the personal daimon (the guardian angel which, at birth, takes charge of the newborn);
- - the bodily senses return to their respective planetary sources.
- - ire and lust, irrational passions, revert to unreasoning nature.

After this first divestment, the soul begins its ascension. Soaring upward through the armature of spheres, it casts off at each station the passion assumed there in the course of its descent: at the 1st station (Moon), the faculty of increase and decrease; at the 2nd (Mercury), malice and cunning; at the 3rd (Venus), the illusion of desire; at the 4th (Sun), the passion for command; at the 5th (Mars), audacity and temerity; at the 6th (Jupiter), the lust for wealth; at the 7th (Saturn), the falsehood that ensnares.

"And thereupon, stripped of the vestments generated by the armature of spheres, the logos enters the ogdoadic essence (the 8th heaven, of pure ether, pure light), having nought now save its own power." (*Corpus Hermeticum* 1.26).

⁴ Note the origin of the expressions 'astral body' and 'sidereal body'.

⁵ Certain philosophers considered this fate inexorable. Neoplatonic philosophers and hermeticists were not so rigid. Recognising its existence, they were able to loosen certain of its constraints. Iamblichus (in *The Mysteries of Egypt*) recalled that the particular character of the personal daimon was judged according to the strongest planet in the nativity, and around 263-8 AD Porphyry wrote: "Blessed is he who, knowing his geniture and ipso facto his own daimon, exorcises fate."



The Geocentric System

Beyond the threshold of the world stands the firmament (from the Latin *firmamentum*: pillar, support), the vault of heaven, pillar of the stars, named 'sphere of the fixed stars'. The Earth, or rather the observer is located at the centre. The Moon is the nearest planet. She receives and transmits to the observer the action of all the other celestial agencies. Then, from the nearest planet to the furthest: Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn.

But it mounts yet higher, to the very Powers divine who reside above the ogdoadic essence. It becomes in turn a Power, and enters into God.

"For such is the blessed consummation for those possessed of gnosis: to become God." (*Corpus Hermeticum* 1.26).

This ascension to the Powers divine is not, however, automatic, the spheres being equally obstacles impossible to overcome. Since the soul's existence as a human being determines the heaven it can attain upon divestment, it risks being unable to traverse one or other of the spheres and plunging back into terrestrial existence. By fasting and prayer, by sacred rites and the aid of mediating powers (gods for the Greeks or Egyptians, angelic hierarchies for the medieval magi) incarnate man can ease from here below his divestment and his inner transmutation.

The Divestment Of The Metals

"Seven are the passages to perfection of matter,"

— wrote Cagliostro in the *Catechism for the Apprentice of the Egyptian Lodge*. Like many other alchemists, Pernety speaks of 'washing', adding that this involves passage through the seven planets, effected by seven successive workings which lead from the different states of Mercury, symbolised by the alchemical metals, to the state of gold.⁶ In

the light of what has just been expounded are such texts illumined⁷.

To be admitted to initiation in the Masonic Order, the layman must divest himself of his metals. Since each metal belongs to a planet this divestment must be intended to show the shedding of the planetary vestures, that the being may contemplate the true light.

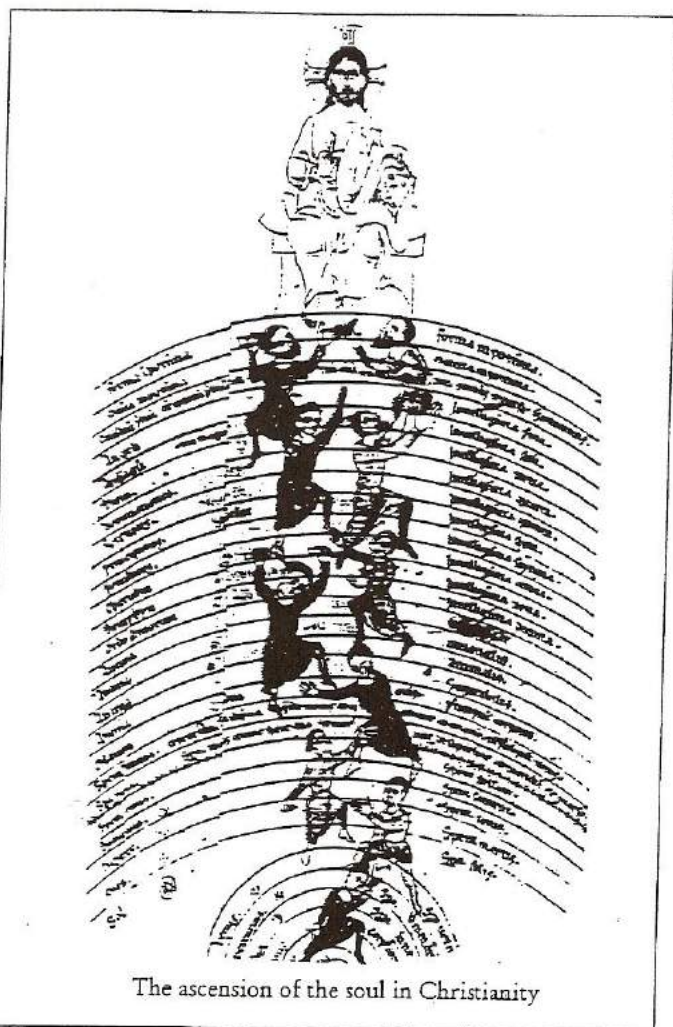
At the 28th Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite,⁸ likewise adopted by the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraim, the candidate is made Knight of the Sun. During a first part of his initiation he is regaled successively in seven cloaks of different colours, draped round him by the seven ministrant angels of the seven planets. During a second part, he divests himself of each of these cloaks. He is at last allowed to contemplate the Sun.

The Attitude Of Christianity

(Taken for the most part from R. Powell's excellent *History of the Planets* — see bibliography)

Christianity tried to eliminate paganism but in fact half the Chaldean doctrine was Christianised. The soul's descent into incarnation was discarded, but its ascension post mortem through the planetary spheres was retained. For the pagan gods presiding over the planetary spheres Christian teaching substituted the celestial hierarchies described in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius. These hierarchies were conceived of in ascending rank, each attributed to a planetary sphere: Angels - sphere of the Moon; Archangels - sphere of Mercury; Principalities - sphere of Venus; Powers - sphere of the Sun; Virtues - sphere of Mars; Dominions - sphere of Jupiter; Thrones - sphere of Saturn; Cherubim - sphere of the zodiac of fixed stars; Seraphim - sphere of crystal. It was considered that after death the human soul reascended the planetary spheres to attain the Empyrean. There, beyond the planetary spheres and the sphere of fixed stars, sat the Holy Trinity. Dante's *Divine Comedy* depicts this ascension of the soul through the planetary spheres and the corresponding ranks of the different hierarchies.

Christianity has recognised the principle of the soul's survival and reascension through the planetary spheres after death. Ancient Chaldean theology recognised in addition the soul's pre-existence and descent through the planetary spheres into incarnation. One simple gesture would have allowed the two teachings to merge in harmony. This was undertaken only by certain gnostic, kabbalistic and initiatory communities.



The ascension of the soul in Christianity

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Translator's Note:

*English versions of these texts are available. The two titles by the author, like his other excellent works on traditional astrology of east and west, have not as yet been translated into English.



⁶ See also Marconis, J.-Et. *Travaux Complets Des Sublimes Maitres Du Grand-Oeuvre* (Complete Labours of the Sublime Masters of the Great Work), Paris, 1866, p.25: "The second goal was to seek the means to redeem matter, which it was believed had also fallen; the seven metals, each of which bore the name of a planet, formed the ascending ladder of material purification corresponding to the moral ordeals of the seven heavens;..."

⁷ These texts remain incomprehensible to the astrologer unversed in the vision of the world that presided at their formulation. The hermetic conception of astrology stands at the very antipodes of the psychological astrology generally practised in Europe at the close of the 20th century. The latter's aim is to get man to make the most of the conditioning and 'potential' with which he is born. The goal of hermetic astrology is, on the contrary, to aid man to divest himself of this conditioning and potential, thus to witness the transformation of an existence and a universe into ever brighter reflection of the divine flame which abides beyond the planetary forces. The psychological thrust of modern astrology is the quest for happiness on earth; the metaphysical thrust of traditional astrology is the quest for freedom in heaven. The real question for the astrologer is not "to what extent is it more-or-less possible to use my free will to live best?", rather "I recognise the power of the conditioning which girds my inmost being. Can I regain my freedom and, if so, how?" This is the question answered by spiritual and initiatory techniques of all times.

⁸ The earliest textual versions of the Degree of Knight of the Sun date from the end of the 18th century. Essentially they represent a mode of instruction in alchemy. Revisions made in the second half of the 19th century accentuate the astrological interpretation.

The Corpus Hermeticum

translated by G.R.S. Mead

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The Corpus Hermeticum

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The Corpus Hermeticum

The Corpus Hermeticum are the core documents of the Hermetic tradition. Dating from early in the Christian era, they were mistakenly dated to a much earlier period by Church officials (and everyone else) up until the 15th century. Because of this, they were allowed to survive and we seen as an early precursor to what was to be Christianity. We know today that they were, in fact, from the early Christian era, and came out of the turbulent religious seas of Hellenic Egypt.

These are all taken from Mead's translations, which are in the public domain at this point.

I. Poemandres, the Shepherd of Men

1. It chanced once on a time my mind was meditating on the things that are, my thought was raised to a great height, the senses of my body being held back – just as men who are weighed down with sleep after a fill of food, or from fatigue of body.

Methought a Being more than vast, in size beyond all bounds, called out my name and saith: What wouldst thou hear and see, and what hast thou in mind to learn and know?

2. And I do say: Who art thou?

He saith: I am Man–Shepherd (Poemandres), Mind of all–masterhood; I know what thou desirest and I'm with thee everywhere.

3. [And] I reply: I long to learn the things that are, and comprehend their nature, and know God. This is, I said, what I desire to hear.

He answered back to me: Hold in thy mind all thou wouldst know, and I will teach thee.

4. E'en with these words His aspect changed, and straightway, in the twinkling of an eye, all things were opened to me, and I see a Vision limitless, all things turned into Light – sweet, joyous [Light]. And I became transported as I gazed.

But in a little while Darkness came settling down on part [of it], awesome and gloomy, coiling in sinuous folds, so that methought it like unto a snake.

And then the Darkness changed into some sort of a Moist Nature, tossed about beyond all power of words, belching out smoke as from a fire, and groaning forth a wailing sound that beggars all description.

[And] after that an outcry inarticulate came forth from it, as though it were a Voice of Fire.

5. [Thereon] out of the Light [...] a Holy Word (Logos) descended on that Nature. And upwards to the height from the Moist Nature leaped forth pure Fire; light was it, swift and active too.

The Air, too, being light, followed after the Fire; from out of the Earth-and-Water rising up to Fire so that it seemed to hang therefrom.

But Earth-and-Water stayed so mingled with each other, that Earth from Water no one could discern. Yet were they moved to hear by reason of the Spirit-Word (Logos) pervading them.

6. Then saith to me Man-Shepherd: Didst understand this Vision what it means?

Nay; that shall I know, said I.

That Light, He said, am I, thy God, Mind, prior to Moist Nature which appeared from Darkness; the Light-Word (Logos) [that appeared] from Mind is Son of God.

What then? – say I.

Know that what sees in thee and hears is the Lord's Word (Logos); but Mind is Father-God. Not separate are they the one from other; just in their union [rather] is it Life consists.

Thanks be to Thee, I said.

So, understand the Light [He answered], and make friends with it.

7. And speaking thus He gazed for long into my eyes, so that I trembled at the look of him.

But when He raised His head, I see in Mind the Light, [but] now in Powers no man could number, and Cosmos grown beyond all bounds, and that the Fire was compassed round about by a most mighty Power, and [now] subdued had come unto a stand.

And when I saw these things I understood by reason of Man-Shepherd's Word (Logos).

8. But as I was in great astonishment, He saith to me again: Thou didst behold in Mind the Archetypal Form whose being is before beginning without end. Thus spake to me Man-Shepherd.

And I say: Whence then have Nature's elements their being?

To this He answer gives: From Will of God. [Nature] received the Word (Logos), and gazing upon the Cosmos Beautiful did copy it, making herself into a cosmos, by means of her own elements and by the births of souls.

9. And God-the-Mind, being male and female both, as Light and Life subsisting, brought forth another Mind to give things form, who, God as he was of Fire and Spirit, formed Seven Rulers who enclose the cosmos that the sense perceives. Men call their ruling Fate.

10. Straightway from out the downward elements God's Reason (Logos) leaped up to Nature's pure formation, and was at-oned with the Formative Mind; for it was co-essential with it. And Nature's downward elements were thus left reason-less, so as to be pure matter.

11. Then the Formative Mind ([at-oned] with Reason), he who surrounds the spheres and spins them with his whorl, set turning his formations, and let them turn from a beginning boundless unto an endless end. For that the circulation of these [spheres] begins where it doth end, as Mind doth will.

And from the downward elements Nature brought forth lives reason-less; for He did not extend the Reason (Logos) [to them]. The Air brought forth things winged; the Water things that swim, and Earth-and-Water one from another parted, as Mind willed. And from her bosom Earth produced what lives she had, four-footed things and reptiles, beasts wild and tame.

12. But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child; for he was beautiful beyond compare, the Image of his Sire. In very truth, God fell in love with his own Form; and on him did bestow all of His own formations.

13. And when he gazed upon what the Enformer had created in the Father, [Man] too wished to enform; and [so] assent was given him by the Father.

Changing his state to the formative sphere, in that he was to have his whole authority, he gazed upon his Brother's creatures. They fell in love with him, and gave him each a share of his own ordering.

And after that he had well learned their essence and had become a sharer in their nature, he had a mind to break right through the Boundary of their spheres, and to subdue the might of that which pressed upon the Fire.

14. So he who hath the whole authority o'er [all] the mortals in the cosmos and o'er its lives irrational, bent his face downwards through the Harmony, breaking right through its strength, and showed to downward Nature God's fair form.

And when she saw that Form of beauty which can never satiate, and him who [now] possessed within himself each single energy of [all seven] Rulers as well as God's own Form, she smiled with love; for 'twas as though she'd seen the image of Man's fairest form upon her Water, his shadow on her Earth.

He in turn beholding the form like to himself, existing in her, in her Water, loved it and willed to live in it; and with the will came act, and [so] he vivified the form devoid of reason.

And Nature took the object of her love and wound herself completely around him, and they were intermingled, for they were lovers.

15. And this is why beyond all creatures on the earth man is twofold; mortal because of body, but because of the essential man immortal.

Though deathless and possessed of sway o'er all, yet doth he suffer as a mortal doth, subject to Fate.

Thus though above the Harmony, within the Harmony he hath become a slave. Though male–female, as from a Father male–female, and though he's sleepless from a sleepless [Sire], yet is he overcome [by sleep].

16. Thereon [I say: Teach on], O Mind of me, for I myself as well am amorous of the Word (Logos).

The Shepherd said: This is the mystery kept hid until this day.

Nature embraced by Man brought forth a wonder, oh so wonderful. For as he had the nature of the Concord of the Seven, who, as I said to thee, [were made] of Fire and Spirit – Nature delayed not, but immediately brought forth seven "men", in correspondence with the natures of the Seven, male–female and moving in the air.

Thereon [I said]: O Shepherd, ..., for now I'm filled with great desire and long to hear; do not run off.

The Shepherd said: Keep silence, for not as yet have I unrolled for thee the first discourse (logoi).

Lo! I am still, I said.

17. In such wise than, as I have said, the generation of these seven came to pass. Earth was as woman, her Water filled with longing; ripeness she took from Fire, spirit from Aether. Nature thus brought forth frames to suit the form of Man.

And Man from Light and Life changed into soul and mind – from Life to soul, from Light to mind.

And thus continued all the sense–world's parts until the period of their end and new beginnings.

18. Now listen to the rest of the discourse (Logos) which thou dost long to hear.

The period being ended, the bond that bound them all was loosened by God's Will. For all the animals being male–female, at the same time with Man were loosed apart; some became partly male, some in like fashion [partly] female. And straightway God spake by His Holy Word (Logos):

"Increase ye in increasing, and multiply in multitude, ye creatures and creations all; and man that hath Mind in him, let him learn to know that he himself is deathless, and that the cause of death is love, though Love is all."

19. When He said this, His Forethought did by means of Fate and Harmony effect their couplings and their generations founded. And so all things were multiplied according to their kind.

And he who thus hath learned to know himself, hath reached that Good which doth transcend abundance; but he who through a love that leads astray, expends his love upon his body – he stays in Darkness wandering, and suffering through his senses things of Death.

20. What is the so great fault, said I, the ignorant commit, that they should be deprived of deathlessness?

Thou seem'st, He said, O thou, not to have given heed to what thou heardest. Did I not bid thee think?

Yea do I think, and I remember, and therefore give Thee thanks.

If thou didst think [thereon], [said He], tell me: Why do they merit death who are in Death?

It is because the gloomy Darkness is the root and base of the material frame; from it came the Moist Nature; from this the body in the sense-world was composed; and from this [body] Death doth the Water drain.

21. Right was thy thought, O thou! But how doth "he who knows himself, go unto Him", as God's Word (Logos) hath declared?

And I reply: the Father of the universals doth consist of Light and Life, from Him Man was born.

Thou sayest well, [thus] speaking. Light and Life is Father-God, and from Him Man was born.

If then thou learnest that thou art thyself of Life and Light, and that thou [happen'st] to be out of them, thou shalt return again to Life. Thus did Man-Shepherd speak.

But tell me further, Mind of me, I cried, how shall I come to Life again...for God doth say: "The man who hath Mind in him, let him learn to know that he himself [is deathless]."

22. Have not all men then Mind?

Thou sayest well, O thou, thus speaking. I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously.

[To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love.

And ere they give up the body unto its proper death, they turn them with disgust from its sensations, from knowledge of what things they operate. Nay, it is I, the Mind, that will not let the operations which befall the body, work to their [natural] end. For being door-keeper I'll close up [all] the entrances, and cut the mental actions off which base and evil energies induce.

23. But to the Mind-less ones, the wicked and depraved, the envious and covetous, and those who mured do and love impiety, I am far off, yielding my place to the Avenging Daimon, who sharpening the fire, tormenteth him and addeth fire to fire upon him, and rusheth upon him through his senses, thus rendering him readier for transgressions of the law, so that he meets with greater torment; nor doth he ever cease to have desire for appetites inordinate, insatiately striving in the dark.

24. Well hast thou taught me all, as I desired, O Mind. And now, pray, tell me further of the nature of the Way Above as now it is [for me].

To this Man-Shepherd said: When the material body is to be dissolved, first thou surrenderest the body by itself unto the work of change, and thus the form thou hadst doth vanish, and thou surrenderest thy way of life, void of its energy, unto the Daimon. The body's senses next pass back into their sources, becoming separate, and resurrect as energies; and passion and desire withdraw unto that nature which is void of reason.

25. And thus it is that man doth speed his way thereafter upwards through the Harmony.

To the first zone he gives the Energy of Growth and Waning; unto the second [zone], Device of Evils [now] de-energized; unto the third, the Guile of the Desires de-energized; unto the fourth, his Domineering Arrogance, [also] de-energized; unto the fifth, unholy Daring and the Rashness of Audacity, de-energized; unto the sixth, Striving for Wealth by evil means, deprived of its aggrandizement; and to the seventh zone, Ensnaring Falsehood, de-energized.

26. And then, with all the energisings of the harmony stript from him, clothed in his proper Power, he cometh to that Nature which belongs unto the Eighth, and there with those-that-are hymneth the Father.

They who are there welcome his coming there with joy; and he, made like to them that sojourn there, doth further hear the Powers who are above the Nature that belongs unto the Eighth, singing their songs of praise to God in language of their own.

And then they, in a band, go to the Father home; of their own selves they make surrender of themselves to Powers, and [thus] becoming Powers they are in God. This the good end for those who have gained Gnosis – to be made one with God.

Why shouldst thou then delay? Must it not be, since thou hast all received, that thou shouldst to the worthy point the way, in order that through thee the race of mortal kind may by [thy] God be saved?

27. This when He'd said, Man-Shepherd mingled with the Powers.

But I, with thanks and blessings unto the Father of the universal [Powers], was freed, full of the power he had poured into me, and full of what He'd taught me of the nature of the All and of the loftiest Vision.

And I began to preach unto men the Beauty of Devotion and of Gnosis:

O ye people, earth-born folk, ye who have given yourselves to drunkenness and sleep and ignorance of God, be sober now, cease from your surfeit, cease to be glamourised by irrational sleep!

28. And when they heard, they came with one accord. Whereon I say:

Ye earth-born folk, why have ye given yourselves up to Death, while yet ye have the power of sharing Deathlessness? Repent, O ye, who walk with Error arm in arm and make of Ignorance the sharer of your board; get ye out from the light of Darkness, and take your part in Deathlessness, forsake Destruction!

29. And some of them with jests upon their lips departed [from me], abandoning themselves unto the Way of Death; others entreated to be taught, casting themselves before my feet.

But I made them arise, and I became a leader of the Race towards home, teaching the words (logoi), how and in what way they shall be saved. I sowed in them the words (logoi) of wisdom; of Deathless Water were they given to drink.

And when even was come and all sun's beams began to set, I bade them all give thanks to God. And when they had brought to an end the giving of their thanks, each man returned to his own resting place.

30. But I recorded in my heart Man-Shepherd's benefaction, and with my every hope fulfilled more than rejoiced. For body's sleep became the soul's awakening, and closing of the eyes – true vision, pregnant with Good my silence, and the utterance of my word (logos) begetting of good things.

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All this befell me from my Mind, that is Man-Shepherd, Word (Logos) of all masterhood, by whom being God-inspired I came unto the Plain of Truth. Wherefore with all my soul and strength thanksgiving give I unto Father-God.

31. Holy art Thou, O God, the universals' Father.

Holy art Thou, O God, whose Will perfects itself by means of its own Powers.

Holy art Thou, O God, who willeth to be known and art known by Thine own.

Holy art Thou, who didst by Word (Logos) make to consist the things that are.

Holy art Thou, of whom All-nature hath been made an image.

Holy art Thou, whose Form Nature hath never made.

Holy art Thou, more powerful than all power.

Holy art Thou, transcending all pre-eminence.

Holy Thou art, Thou better than all praise.

Accept my reason's offerings pure, from soul and heart for aye stretched up to Thee, O Thou unutterable, unspeakable, Whose Name naught but the Silence can express.

32. Give ear to me who pray that I may ne'er of Gnosis fail, [Gnosis] which is our common being's nature; and fill me with Thy Power, and with this Grace [of Thine], that I may give the Light to those in ignorance of the Race, my Brethren, and Thy Sons.

For this cause I believe, and I bear witness; I go to Life and Light. Blessed art Thou, O Father. Thy Man would holy be as Thou art holy, e'en as Thou gave him Thy full authority [to be].

II. To Asclepius

1. Hermes: All that is moved, Asclepius, is it not moved in something and by something?

Asclepius: Assuredly.

H: And must not that in which it's moved be greater than the moved?

A: It must.

H: Mover, again, has greater power than moved?

A: It has, of course.

H: The nature, furthermore, of that in which it's moved must be quite other from the nature of the moved?

A: It must completely.

2. H: Is not, again, this cosmos vast, [so vast] that than it there exists no body greater?

A: Assuredly.

H: And massive, too, for it is crammed with multitudes of other mighty frames, nay, rather all the other bodies that there are?

A: It is.

H: And yet the cosmos is a body?

A: It is a body.

H: And one that's moved?

3. A: Assuredly.

H: Of what size, then, must be the space in which it's moved, and of what kind [must be] the nature [of that space]? Must it not be far vaster [than the cosmos], in order that it may be able to find room for its continued course, so that the moved may not be cramped for want of room and lose its motion?

A: Something, Thrice-greatest one, it needs must be, immensely vast.

4. H: And of what nature? Must it not be, Asclepius, of just the contrary? And is not contrary to body bodiless?

A: Agreed.

H: Space, then, is bodiless. But bodiless must either be some godlike thing or God [Himself]. And by "some godlike thing" I mean no more the generable [i.e., that which is generated] but the ingenerable.

5. If, then, space be some godlike thing, it is substantial; but if 'tis God [Himself], it transcends substance. But it is to be thought of otherwise [than God], and in this way.

God is first "thinkable" for us, not for Himself, for that the thing that's thought doth fall beneath the thinker's sense. God then cannot be "thinkable" unto Himself, in that He's thought of by Himself as being nothing else but what He thinks. But he is "something else" for us, and so He's thought of by us.

6. If space is, therefore, to be thought, [it should] not, [then, be thought as] God, but space. If God is also to be thought, [He should] not [be conceived] as space, but as energy that can contain [all space].

Further, all that is moved is moved not in the moved but in the stable. And that which moves [another] is of course stationary, for 'tis impossible that it should move with it.

A: How is it, then, that things down here, Thrice-greatest one, are moved with those that are [already] moved? For thou hast said the errant spheres were moved by the inerrant one.

H: This is not, O Asclepius, a moving with, but one against; they are not moved with one another, but one against the other. It is this contrariety which turneth the resistance of their motion into rest. For that resistance is the rest of motion.

7. Hence, too, the errant spheres, being moved contrarily to the inerrant one, are moved by one another by mutual contrariety, [and also] by the spable one through contrariety itself. And this can otherwise not be.

The Bears up there, which neither set nor rise, think'st thou they rest or move?

A: They move, Thrice-greatest one.

H: And what their motion, my Asclepius?

A: Motion that turns for ever round the same.

H: But revolution – motion around same – is fixed by rest. For "round-the-same" doth stop "beyond-same". "Beyond-same" then, being stopped, if it be steadied in "round-same" – the contrary stands firm, being rendered ever stable by its contrariety.

8. Of this I'll give thee here on earth an instance, which the eye can see. Regard the animals down here – a man, for instance, swimming! The water moves, yet the resistance of his hands and feet give him stability, so that he is not borne along with it, nor sunk thereby.

A: Thou hast, Thrice-greatest one, adduced a most clear instance.

H: All motion, then, is caused in station and by station.

The motion, therefore, of the cosmos (and of every other hylic animal) will not be caused by things exterior to the cosmos, but by things interior [outward] to the exterior – such [things] as soul, or spirit, or some such other thing incorporeal.

'Tis not the body that doth move the living thing in it; nay, not even the whole [body of the universe a lesser] body e'en though there be no life in it.

9. A: What meanest thou by this, Thrice-greatest one? Is it not bodies, then, that move the stock and stone and all the other things inanimate?

H: By no means, O Asclepius. The something-in-the-body, the that-which-moves the thing inanimate, this surely's not a body, for that it moves the two of them – both body of the lifter and the lifted? So that a thing that's lifeless will not move a lifeless thing. That which doth move [another thing] is animate, in that it is the mover.

Thou seest, then, how heavy laden is the soul, for it alone doth lift two bodies. That things, moreover, moved are moved in something as well as moved by something is clear.

10. A: Yea, O Thrice-greatest one, things moved must needs be moved in something void.

H: Thou sayest well, O [my] Asclepius! For naught of things that are is void. Alone the "is-not" is void [and] stranger to subsistence. For that which is subsistent can never change to void.

A: Are there, then, O Thrice-greatest one, no such things as an empty cask, for instance, and an empty jar, a cup and vat, and other things like unto them?

H: Alack, Asclepius, for thy far-wandering from the truth! Think'st thou that things most full and most replete are void?

11. A: How meanest thou, Thrice-greatest one?

H: Is not air body?

A: It is.

H: And doth this body not pervade all things, and so, pervading, fill them? And "body"; doth body not consist from blending of the "four" ? Full, then, of air are all thou callest void; and if of air, then of the "four".

Further, of this the converse follows, that all thou callest full are void – of air; for that they have their space filled out with other bodies, and, therefore, are not able to receive the air therein. These, then, which thou dost say are void, they should be hollow named, not void; for they not only are, but they are full of air and spirit.

12. A: Thy argument (logos), Thrice-greatest one, is not to be gainsaid; air is a body. Further, it is this body which doth pervade all things, and so, pervading, fill them. What are we, then, to call that space in which the all doth move?

H: The bodiless, Asclepius.

A: What, then, is Bodiless?

H: 'Tis Mind and Reason (logos), whole out of whole, all self-embracing, free from all body, from all error free, unsensible to body and untouchable, self stayed in self, containing all, preserving those that are, whose rays, to use a likeness, are Good, Truth, Light beyond light, the Archetype of soul.

A: What, then, is God?

13. H: Not any one of these is He; for He it is that causeth them to be, both all and each and every thing of all that are. Nor hath He left a thing beside that is-not; but they are all from things-that-are and not from things-that-are-not. For that the things-that-are-not have naturally no power of being anything, but naturally have the power of the inability-to-be. And, conversely, the things-that-are have not the nature of some time not-being.

14. A: What say'st thou ever, then, God is?

H: God, therefore, is not Mind, but Cause that the Mind is; God is not Spirit, but Cause that Spirit is; God is not Light, but Cause that the Light is. Hence one should honor God with these two names [the Good and Father] – names which pertain to Him alone and no one else.

For no one of the other so-called gods, no one of men, or daimones, can be in any measure Good, but God alone; and He is Good alone and nothing else. The rest of things are separable all from the Good's nature; for [all the rest] are soul and body, which have no place that can contain the Good.

15. For that as mighty is the Greatness of the Good as is the Being of all things that are – both bodies and things bodiless, things sensible and intelligible things. Call thou not, therefore, aught else Good, for thou would'st imious be; nor anything at all at any time call God but Good alone, for so thou would'st again be impious.

16. Though, then, the Good is spoken of by all, it is not understood by all, what thing it is. Not only, then, is God not understood by all, but both unto the gods and some of the men they out of ignorance do give the name of Good, though they can never either be or become Good. For they are very different from God, while

Good can never be distinguished from Him, for that God is the same as Good.

The rest of the immortal ones are nonetheless honored with the name of God, and spoken of as gods; but God is Good not out of courtesy but out of nature. For that God's nature and the Good is one; one of the kind of both, from which all other kinds [proceed].

The Good is he who gives all things and naught receives. God, then, doth give all things and receive naught. God, then, is Good, and Good is God.

17. The other name of God is Father, again because He is the that-which-maketh-all. The part of father is to make.

Wherefore child-making is a very great and a most pious thing in life for them who think aright, and to leave life on earth without a child a very great misfortune and impiety; and he who hath no child is punished by the daimones after death.

And this is the punishment: that that man's soul who hath no child, shall be condemned unto a body with neither man's nor woman's nature, a thing accursed beneath the sun.

Wherefore, Asclepius, let not your sympathies be with the man who hath no child, but rather pity his mishap, knowing what punishment abides for him.

Let all that has been said then, be to thee, Asclepius, an introduction to the gnosis of the nature of all things.

III. The Sacred Sermon

1. The Glory of all things is God, Godhead and Godly Nature. Source of the things that are is God, who is both Mind and Nature – yea Matter, the Wisdom that reveals all things. Source [too] is Godhead – yea Nature, Energy, Necessity, and End, and Making-new-again.

Darkness that knew no bounds was in Abyss, and Water [too] and subtle Breath intelligent; these were by Power of God in Chaos.

Then Holy Light arose; and there collected 'neath Dry Space from out Moist Essence Elements; and all the Gods do separate things out from fecund Nature.

2. All things being undefined and yet unwrought, the light things were assigned unto the height, the heavy ones had their foundations laid down underneath the moist part of Dry Space, the universal things being bounded off by Fire and hanged in Breath to keep them up.

And Heaven was seen in seven circles; its Gods were visible in forms of stars with all their signs; while Nature had her members made articulate together with the Gods in her. And [Heaven's] periphery revolved in cyclic course, borne on by Breath of God.

3. And every God by his own proper power brought forth what was appointed him. Thus there arose four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and those that in the water dwell, and things with wings, and everything that beareth seed, and grass, and shoot of every flower, all having in themselves seed of again-becoming.

And they selected out the births of men for gnosis of the works of God and attestation of the energy of Nature; the multitude of men for lordship over all beneath the heaven and gnosis of its blessings, that they might increase in increasing and multiply in multitude, and every soul infleshed by revolution of the Cyclic Gods, for observation of the marvels of Heaven and Heaven's Gods' revolution, and of the works of God and energy of Nature, for tokens of its blessings, for gnosis of the power of God, that they might know the fates that follow good and evil [deeds] and learn the cunning work of all good arts.

4. [Thus] there begins their living and their growing wise, according to the fate appointed by the revolution of the Cyclic Gods, and their deceasing for this end.

And there shall be memorials mighty of their handiworks upon the earth, leaving dim trace behind when cycles are renewed.

For every birth of flesh ensouled, and of the fruit of seed, and every handiwork, though it decay, shall of necessity renew itself, both by the renovation of the Gods and by the turning-round of Nature's rhythmic wheel.

For that whereas the Godhead is Nature's ever-making-new-again the cosmic mixture, Nature herself is also co-established in that Godhead.

IV. The Cup or Monad

1. Hermes: With Reason (Logos), not with hands, did the World-maker make the universal World; so that thou shouldst think of him as everywhere and ever-being, the Author of all things, and One and Only, who by His Will all beings hath created.

This Body of Him is a thing no man can touch, or see, or measure, a body inextensible, like to no other frame. 'Tis neither Fire nor Water, Air nor Breath; yet all of them come from it. Now being Good he willed to consecrate this [Body] to Himself alone, and set its Earth in order and adorn it.

2. So down [to Earth] He sent the Cosmos of this Frame Divine – man, a life that cannot die, and yet a life that dies. And o'er [all other] lives and over Cosmos [too], did man excel by reason of the Reason (Logos) and the Mind. For contemplator of God's works did man become; he marvelled and did strive to know their Author.

3. Reason (Logos) indeed, O Tat, among all men hath He distributed, but Mind not yet; not that He grudgeth any, for grudging cometh not from Him, but hath its place below, within the souls of men who have no Mind.

Tat: Why then did God, O father, not on all bestow a share of Mind?

H: He willed, my son, to have it set up in the midst for souls, just as it were a prize.

4. T: And where hath He set it up?

H: He filled a mighty Cup with it, and sent it down, joining a Herald [to it], to whom He gave command to make this proclamation to the hearts of men:

Baptize thyself with this Cup's baptism, what heart can do so, thou that hast faith thou canst ascend to him that hath sent down the Cup, thou that dost know for what thou didst come into being!

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As many then as understood the Herald's tidings and doused themselves in Mind, became partakers in the Gnosis; and when they had "received the Mind" they were made "perfect men".

But they who do not understand the tidings, these, since they possess the aid of Reason [only] and not Mind, are ignorant wherefor they have come into being and whereby.

5. The senses of such men are like irrational creatures'; and as their [whole] make-up is in their feelings and their impulses, they fail in all appreciation of those things which really are worth contemplation. These center all their thought upon the pleasures of the body and its appetites, in the belief that for its sake man hath come into being.

But they who have received some portion of God's gift, these, Tat, if we judge by their deeds, have from Death's bonds won their release; for they embrace in their own Mind all things, things on the earth, things in the heaven, and things above the heaven – if there be aught. And having raised themselves so far they sight the Good; and having sighted it, they look upon their sojourn here as a mischance; and in disdain of all, both things in body and the bodiless, they speed their way unto that One and Only One.

6. This is, O Tat, the Gnosis of the Mind, Vision of things Divine; God-knowledge is it, for the Cup is God's.

T: Father, I, too, would be baptized.

H: Unless thou first shall hate thy Body, son, thou canst not love thy Self. But if thou lov'st thy Self thou shalt have Mind, and having Mind thou shalt share in the Gnosis.

T: Father, what dost thou mean?

H: It is not possible, my son, to give thyself to both – I mean to things that perish and to things divine. For seeing that existing things are twain, Body and Bodiless, in which the perishing and the divine are understood, the man who hath the will to choose is left the choice of one or the other; for it can never be the twain should meet. And in those souls to whom the choice is left, the waning of the one causes the other's growth to show itself.

7. Now the choosing of the Better not only proves a lot most fair for him who makes the choice, seeing it makes the man a God, but also shows his piety to God. Whereas the [choosing] of the Worse, although it doth destroy the "man", it doth only disturb God's harmony to this extent, that as processions pass by in the middle of the way, without being able to do anything but take the road from others, so do such men move in procession through the world led by their bodies' pleasures.

8. This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press onward and have no delay, for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

Thou see'st, son, how many are the bodies through which we have to pass, how many are the choirs of daimones, how vast the system of the star-courses [through which our Path doth lie], to hasten to the One and Only God.

For to the Good there is no other shore; It hath no bounds; It is without an end; and for Itself It is without beginning, too, though unto us it seemeth to have one – the Gnosis.

9. Therefore to It Gnosis is no beginning; rather is it [that Gnosis doth afford] to us the first beginning of its being known.

IV. The Cup or Monad

Let us lay hold, therefore, of the beginning, and quickly speed through all [we have to pass].

`Tis very hard, to leave the things we have grown used to, which meet our gaze on every side, and turn ourselves back to the Old Old [Path].

Appearances delight us, whereas things which appear not make their believing hard.

Now evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure.

Therefore the Good is like Itself alone, and unlike all things else; or `tis impossible that That which hath no body should make Itself apparent to a body.

10. The "Like's" superiority to the "Unlike" and the "Unlike's" inferiority unto the "Like" consists in this:

The Oneness being Source and Root of all, is in all things as Root and Source. Without [this] Source is naught; whereas the Source [Itself] is from naught but itself, since it is Source of all the rest. It is Itself Its Source, since It may have no other Source.

The Oneness then being Source, containeth every number, but is contained by none; engendereth every number, but is engendered by no other one.

11. Now all that is engendered is imperfect, it is divisible, to increase subject and to decrease; but with the Perfect [One] none of these things doth hold. Now that which is increasable increases from the Oneness, but succumbs through its own feebleness when it no longer can contain the One.

And now, O Tat, God's Image hath been sketched for thee, as far as it can be; and if thou wilt attentively dwell on it and observe it with thine heart's eyes, believe me, son, thou'lt find the Path that leads above; nay, that Image shall become thy Guide itself, because the Sight [Divine] hath this peculiar [charm], it holdeth fast and draweth unto it those who succeed in opening their eyes, just as, they say, the magnet [draweth] iron.

V. Though Unmanifest God Is Most Manifest

1. I will recount to thee this sermon (logos) too, O Tat, that thou may'st cease to be without the mysteries of the God beyond all name. And mark thou well how that which to the many seems unmanifest, will grow most manifest for thee.

Now were it manifest, it would not be. For all that is made manifest is subject to becoming, for it hath been made manifest. But the Unmanifest for ever is, for It doth not desire to be made manifest. It ever is, and maketh manifest all other things.

Being Himself unmanifest, as ever being and ever making-manifest, Himself is not made manifest. God is not made Himself; by thinking-manifest, He thinketh all things manifest.

Now "thinking-manifest" deals with things made alone, for thinking-manifest is nothing else than making.

2. He, then, alone who is not made, 'tis clear, is both beyond all power of thinking-manifest, and is unmanifest.

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And as He thinketh all things manifest, He manifests through all things and in all, and most of all in whatsoever things He wills to manifest.

Do thou, then, Tat, my son, pray first unto our Lord and Father, the One-and-Only One, from whom the One doth come, to show His mercy unto thee, in order that thou mayest have the power to catch a thought of this so mighty God, one single beam of Him to shine into thy thinking. For thought alone "sees" the Unmanifest, in that it is itself unmanifest.

If, then, thou hast the power, He will, Tat, manifest to thy mind's eyes. The Lord begrudgeth not Himself to anything, but manifests Himself through the whole world.

Thou hast the power of taking thought, of seeing it and grasping it in thy own "hands", and gazing face to face upon God's Image. But if what is within thee even is unmanifest to thee, how, then, shall He Himself who is within thy self be manifest for thee by means of [outer] eyes?

3. But if thou wouldst "see" him, bethink thee of the sun, bethink thee of moon's course, bethink thee of the order of the stars. Who is the One who watcheth o'er that order? For every order hath its boundaries marked out by place and number.

The sun's the greatest god of gods in heaven; to whom all of the heavenly gods give place as unto king and master. And he, this so-great one, he greater than the earth and sea, endures to have above him circling smaller stars than him. Out of respect to Whom, or out of fear of Whom, my son, [doth he do this]?

Nor like nor equal is the course each of these stars describes in heaven. Who [then] is He who marketh out the manner of their course and its extent?

4. The Bear up there that turneth round itself, and carries round the whole cosmos with it – Who is the owner of this instrument? Who He who hath set round the sea its bounds? Who He who hath set on its seat the earth?

For, Tat, there is someone who is the Maker and the Lord of all these things. It could not be that number, place and measure could be kept without someone to make them. No order whatsoever could be made by that which lacketh place and lacketh measure; nay, even this is not without a lord, my son. For if the orderless lacks something, in that it is not lord of order's path, it also is beneath a lord – the one who hath not yet ordained it order.

5. Would that it were possible for thee to get thee wings, and soar into the air, and, poised midway 'tween earth and heaven, behold the earth's solidity, the sea's fluidity (the flowings of its streams), the spaciousness of air, fire's swiftness, [and] the coursing of the stars, the swiftness of heaven's circuit round them [all]!

Most blessed sight were it, my son, to see all these beneath one sway – the motionless in motion, and the unmanifest made manifest; whereby is made this order of the cosmos and the cosmos which we see of order.

6. If thou would'st see Him too through things that suffer death, both on the earth and in the deep, think of a man's being fashioned in the womb, my son, and strictly scrutinize the art of Him who fashions him, and learn who fashioneth this fair and godly image of the Man.

Who [then] is He who traceth out the circles of the eyes; who He who boreth out the nostrils and the ears; who He who openeth [the portal of] the mouth; who He who doth stretch out and tie the nerves; who He who channels out the veins; who He who hardeneth the bones; who He who covereth the flesh with skin; who He who separates the fingers and the joints; who He who widens out a treading for the feet; who He who diggeth

out the ducts; who He who spreadeth out the spleen; who he who shapeth heart like to a pyramid; who He who setteth ribs together; who He who wideneth the liver out; who He who maketh lungs like to a sponge; who He who maketh belly stretch so much; who he who doth make prominent the parts most honorable, so that they may be seen, while hiding out of sight those of least honor?

7. Behold how many arts [employed] on one material, how many labors on one single sketch; and all exceeding fair, and all in perfect measure, yet all diversified! Who made them all? What mother, or what sire, save God alone, unmanifest, who hath made all things by His Will?

8. And no one saith a statue or a picture comes to be without a sculptor or [without] a painter; doth [then] such workmanship as this exist without a Worker? What depth of blindness, what deep impiety, what depth of ignorance! See, [then] thou ne'er, son Tat, deprivest works of Worker!

Nay, rather is He greater than all names, so great is He, the Father of them all. For verily He is the Only One, and this is His work, to be a father.

9. So, if thou forcest me somewhat too bold, to speak, His being is conceiving of all things and making [them].

And as without its maker its is impossible that anything should be, so ever is He not unless He ever makes all things, in heaven, in air, in earth, in deep, in all of cosmos, in every part that is and that is not of everything. For there is naught in all the world that is not He.

He is Himself, both things that are and things that are not. The things that are He hath made manifest, He keepeth things that are not in Himself.

10. He is the God beyond all name; He the unmanifest, He the most manifest; He whom the mind [alone] can contemplate, He visible to the eyes [as well]; He is the one of no body, the one of many bodies, nay, rather He of every body.

Naught is there which he is not. For all are He and He is all. And for this cause hath He all names, in that they are one Father's. And for this cause hath He Himself no nome, in that He's Father of [them] all.

Who, then, may sing Thee praise of Thee, or [praise] to Thee?

Whither, again, am I to turn my eyes to sing Thy praise; above, below, within, without?

There is no way, no place [is there] about Thee, nor any other thing of things that are.

All [are] in Thee; all [are] from Thee, O Thou who givest all and takest naught, for Thou hast all and naught is there Thou hast not.

11. And when, O Father, shall I hymn Thee? For none can seize Thy hour or time.

For what, again, shall I sing hymn? For things that Thou hast made, or things Thou hast not? For things Thou hast made manifest, or things Thou hast concealed?

How, further, shall I hymn Thee? As being of myself? As having something of mine own? As being other?

For that Thou art whatever I may be; Thou art whatever I may do; Thou art whatever I may speak.

For Thou art all, and there is nothing else which Thou art not. Thou art all that which doth exist, and Thou art what doth not exist – Mind when Thou thinkest, and Father when Thou makest, and God when Thou dost energize, and Good and Maker of all things.

For that the subtler part of matter is the air, of air the soul, of soul the mind, and of mind God.

VI. In God Alone Is Good And Elsewhere Nowhere

1. Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save in God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally.

If it be so, [Good] must be essence, from every kind of motion and becoming free (though naught is free from It), possessed of stable energy around Itself, never too little, nor too much, an ever-full supply. [Though] one, yet [is It] source of all; for what supplieth all is Good. When I, moreover, say [supplieth] altogether [all], it is for ever Good. But this belongs to no one else save God alone.

For He stands not in need of any thing, so that desiring it He should be bad; nor can a single thing of things that are be lost to him, on losing which He should be pained; for pain is part of bad.

Nor is there aught superior to Him, that He should be subdued by it; nor any peer to Him to do Him wrong, or [so that] He should fall in love on its account; nor aught that gives no ear to Him, whereat He should grow angry; nor wiser aught, for Him to envy.

2. Now as all these are non-existent in His being, what is there left but Good alone?

For just as naught of bad is to be found in such transcendent Being, so too in no one of the rest will Good be found.

For in them are all of the other things – both in the little and the great, both in each severally and in this living one that's greater than them all and the mightiest [of them].

For things subject to birth abound in passions, birth in itself being passible. But where there's passion, nowhere is there Good; and where is Good, nowhere a single passion. For where is day, nowhere is night; and where is night, day is nowhere.

Wherefore in genesis the Good can never be, but only be in the ingenerate.

But seeing that the sharing in all things hath been bestowed on matter, so doth it share in Good.

In this way is the Cosmos Good; that, in so far as it doth make all things, as far as making goes it's Good, but in all other things it is not Good. For it's both passible and subject unto motion, and maker of things passible.

3. Whereas in man by greater or less of bad is good determined. For what is not too bad down here, is good, and good down here is the least part of bad.

It cannot, therefore, be that good down here should be quite clean of bad, for down here good is fouled with bad; and being fouled, it stays no longer good, and staying not it changes into bad.

In God alone, is, therefore, Good, or rather Good is God Himself.

So then, Asclepius, the name alone of Good is found in men, the thing itself nowhere [in them], for this can never be.

For no material body doth contain It – a thing bound on all sides by bad, by labors, pains, desires and passions, by error and by foolish thoughts.

And greatest ill of all, Asclepius, is that each of these things that have been said above, is thought down here to be the greatest good.

And what is still an even greater ill, is belly-lust, the error that doth lead the band of all the other ills – the thing that makes us turn down here from Good.

4. And I, for my part, give thanks to God, that He hath cast it in my mind about the Gnosis of the Good, that it can never be It should be in the world. For that the world is "fullness" of the bad, but God of Good, and Good of God.

The excellencies of the Beautiful are round the very essence [of the Good]; nay, they do seem too pure, too unalloyed; perchance 'tis they that are themselves Its essences.

For one may dare to say, Asclepius – if essence, sooth, He have – God's essence is the Beautiful; the Beautiful is further also Good.

There is no Good that can be got from objects in the world. For all the things that fall beneath the eye are image-things and pictures as it were; while those that do not meet [the eye are the realities], especially the [essence] of the Beautiful and Good.

Just as the eye cannot see God, so can it not behold the Beautiful and Good. For that they are integral parts of God, wedded to Him alone, inseparable familiars, most beloved, with whom God is Himself in love, or they with God.

5. If thou canst God conceive, thou shalt conceive the Beautiful and Good, transcending Light, made lighter than the Light by God. That Beauty is beyond compare, inimitable that Good, e'en as God is Himself.

As, then, thou dost conceive of God, conceive the Beautiful and Good. For they cannot be joined with aught of other things that live, since they can never be divorced from God.

Seek'st thou for God, thou seekest for the Beautiful. One is the Path that leadeth unto It – Devotion joined with Gnosis.

6. And thus it is that they who do not know and do not tread Devotion's Path, do dare to call man beautiful and good, though he have ne'er e'en in his visions seen a whit that's Good, but is enveloped with every kind of bad, and thinks the bad is good, and thus doth make unceasing use of it, and even feareth that it should be ta'en from him, so straining every nerve not only to preserve but even to increase it.

Such are the things that men call good and beautiful, Asclepius – things which we cannot flee or hate; for hardest thing of all is that we've need of them and cannot live without them.

VII. The Greatest Ill Among Men is Ignorance of God

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1. Whither stumble ye, sots, who have sopped up the wine of ignorance and can so far not carry it that ye already even spew it forth?

Stay ye, be sober, gaze upwards with the [true] eyes of the heart! And if ye cannot all, yet ye at least who can!

For that the ill of ignorance doth pour o'er all the earth and overwhelm the soul that's battened down within the body, preventing it from fetching port within Salvation's harbors.

2. Be ye then not carried off by the fierce flood, but using the shore-current ye who can, make for Salvation's port, and, harboring there, seek ye for one to take you by the hand and lead you unto Gnosis' gates.

Where shines clear Light, of every darkness clean; where not a single soul is drunk, but sober all they gaze with their hearts' eyes on Him who willeth to be seen.

No ear can hear Him, nor can eye see Him, nor tongue speak of Him, but [only] mind and heart.

But first thou must tear off from thee the cloak which thou dost wear – the web of ignorance, the ground of bad, corruption's chain, the carapace of darkness, the living death, sensation's corpse, the tomb thou carriest with thee, the robber in thy house, who through the things he loveth, hateth thee, and through the things he hateth, bears thee malice.

3. Such is the hateful cloak thou wearest – that throttles thee [and holds thee] down to it, in order that thou may'st not gaze above, and having seen the Beauty of the Truth, and Good that dwells therein, detest the bad of it; having found out the plot that it hath schemed against thee, by making void of sense those seeming things which men think senses.

For that it hath with mass of matter blocked them up and crammed them full of loathsome lust, so that thou may'st not hear about the things that thou should'st hear, nor see the things thou should'st see.

VIII. That No One of Existing Things doth Perish, but Men in Error Speak of Their Changes as Destructions and as Deaths

1. [Hermes:] Concerning Soul and Body, son, we now must speak; in what way Soul is deathless, and whence comes the activity in composing and dissolving Body.

For there's no death for aught of things [that are]; the thought this word conveys, is either void of fact, or [simply] by the knocking off a syllable what is called "death", doth stand for "deathless".

For death is of destruction, and nothing in the Cosmos is destroyed. For if Cosmos is second God, a life that cannot die, it cannot be that any part of this immortal life should die. All things in Cosmos are parts of Cosmos, and most of all is man, the rational animal.

2. For truly first of all, eternal and transcending birth, is God the universals' Maker. Second is he "after His image", Cosmos, brought into being by Him, sustained and fed by Him, made deathless, as by his own Sire, living for aye, as ever free from death.

Now that which ever-liveth, differs from the Eternal; for He hath not been brought to being by another, and even if He have been brought to being, He hath not been brought to being by Himself, but ever is brought into being.

For the Eternal, in that It is eternal, is the all. The Father is Himself eternal of Himself, but Cosmos hath become eternal and immortal by the Father.

3. And of the matter stored beneath it, the Father made of it a universal body, and packing it together made it spherical – wrapping it round the life – [a sphere] which is immortal in itself, and that doth make materiality eternal.

But He, the Father, full-filled with His ideas, did sow the lives into the sphere, and shut them in as in a cave, willing to order forth the life with every kind of living.

So He with deathlessness enclosed the universal body, that matter might not wish to separate itself from body's composition, and so dissolve into its own [original] unordered.

For matter, son, when it was yet incorporate, was in unordered. And it doth still retain down here this [nature of unordered] enveloping the rest of the small lives – that increase-and-decrease which men call death.

4. It is round earthly lives that this unordered doth exist. For that the bodies of the heavenly ones preserve one order allotted to them by the Father as their rule; and it is by the restoration of each one [of them] this order is preserved indissoluble.

The "restoration" of bodies on the earth is thus their composition, whereas their dissolution restores them to those bodies which can never be dissolved, that is to say, which know no death. Privation, thus, of sense is brought about, not loss of bodies.

5. Now the third life – Man, after the image of the Cosmos made, [and] having mind, after the Father's will, beyond all earthly lives – not only doth have feeling with the second God, but also hath conception of the first; for of the one 'tis sensible as of a body, while of the other it conceives as bodiless and the Good Mind.

Tat: Doth then this life not perish?

Hermes: Hush, son! and understand what God, what Cosmos [is], what is a life that cannot die, and what a life subject to dissolution.

Yea, understand the Cosmos is by God and in God; but Man by Cosmos and in Cosmos.

The source and limit and the constitution of all things is God.

IX. On Thought and Sense

1. I gave the Perfect Sermon (Logos) yesterday, Asclepius; today I think it right, as sequel thereunto, to go through point by point the Sermon about Sense.

Now sense and thought do seem to differ, in that the former has to do with matter, the latter has to do with substance. But unto me both seem to be at-one and not to differ – in men I mean. In other lives sense is at-oned with Nature, but in men thought.

Now mind doth differ just as much from thought as God doth from divinity. For that divinity by God doth come to be, and by mind thought, the sister of the word (logos) and instruments of one another. For neither doth the word (logos) find utterance without thought, nor is thought manifested without word.

2. So sense and thought both flow together into man, as though they were entwined with one another. For neither without sensing can one think, nor without thinking sense.

But it is possible [they say] to think a thing apart from sense, as those who fancy sights in dreams. But unto me it seems that both of these activities occur in dream-sight, and sense doth pass out of the sleeping to the waking state.

For man is separated into soul and body, and only when the two sides of his sense agree together, does utterance of its thought conceived by mind take place.

3. For it is mind that doth conceive all thoughts – good thoughts when it receives the seeds from God, their contraries when [it receiveth them] from the daimonials; no part of Cosmos being free of daimon, who stealthily doth creep into the daimon who's illumined by God's light, and sow in him the seed of its own energy.

And mind conceives the seed thus sown, adultery, murder, parricide, [and] sacrilege, impiety, [and] strangling, casting down precipices, and all such other deeds as are the work of evil daimons.

4. The seeds of God, 'tis true, are few, but vast and fair, and good – virtue and self-control, devotion. Devotion is God-gnosis; and he who knoweth God, being filled with all good things, thinks godly thoughts and not thoughts like the many [think].

For this cause they who Gnostic are, please not the many, nor the many them. They are thought mad and laughed at; they're hated and despised, and sometimes even put to death.

For we did say that bad must needs dwell on earth, where 'tis in its own place. Its place is earth, and not Cosmos, as some will sometimes say with impious tongue.

But he who is a devotee of God, will bear with all – once he has sensed the Gnosis. For such an one all things, e'en though they be for others bad, are for him good; deliberately he doth refer them all unto the Gnosis. And, thing most marvelous, 'tis he alone who maketh bad things good.

5. But I return once more to the Discourse (Logos) on Sense. That sense doth share with thought in man, doth constitute him man. But 'tis not [every] man, as I have said, who benefits by thought; for this man is material, that other one substantial.

For the material man, as I have said, [consorting] with the bad, doth have his seed of thought from daimons; while the substantial men [consorting] with the Good, are saved by God.

Now God is Maker of all things, and in His making, He maketh all [at last] like to Himself; but they, while they're becoming good by exercise of their activity, are unproductive things.

It is the working of the Cosmic Course that maketh their becomings what they are, befouling some of them with bad and others of them making clean with good.

For Cosmos, too, Asclepius, possesseth sense-and-thought peculiar to itself, not like that of man; 'tis not so manifold, but as it were a better and a simpler one.

The Corpus Hermeticum

6. The single sense-and-thought of Cosmos is to make all things, and make them back into itself again, as Organ of the Will of God, so organized that it, receiving all the seeds into itself from God, and keeping them within itself, may make all manifest, and [then] dissolving them, make them all new again; and thus, like a Good Gardener of Life, things that have been dissolved, it taketh to itself, and giveth them renewal once again.

There is no thing to which it gives not life; but taking all unto itself it makes them live, and is at the same time the Place of Life and its Creator.

7. Now bodies matter [–made] are in diversity. Some are of earth, of water some, some are of air, and some of fire.

But they are all composed; some are more [composite], and some are simpler. The heavier ones are more [composed], the lighter less so.

It is the speed of Cosmos' Course that works the manifoldness of the kinds of births. For being a most swift Breath, it doth bestow their qualities on bodies together with the One Pleroma – that of Life.

8. God, then, is Sire of Cosmos; Cosmos, of all in Cosmos. And Cosmos is God's Son; but things in Cosmos are by Cosmos.

And properly hath it been called Cosmos [Order]; for that it orders all with their diversity of birth, with its not leaving aught without its life, with the unweariedness of its activity, the speed of its necessity, the composition of its elements, and order of its creatures.

The same, then, of necessity and propriety should have the name of Order.

The sense-and-thought, then, of all lives doth come into them from without, inbreathed by what contains [them all]; whereas Cosmos receives them once for all together with its coming into being, and keeps them as a gift from God.

9. But God is not, as some suppose, beyond the reach of sense-and-thought. It is through superstition men thus impiously speak.

For all the things that are, Asclepius, all are in God, are brought by God to be, and do depend on Him – both things that act through bodies, and things that through soul-substance make [other things] to move, and things that make things live by means of spirit, and things that take unto themselves the things that are worn out.

And rightly so; nay, I would rather say, He doth not have these things; but I speak forth the truth, He is them all Himself. He doth not get them from without, but gives them out [from Him].

This is God's sense-and-thought, ever to move all things. And never time shall be when e'en a whit of things that are shall cease; and when I say "a whit of things that are", I mean a whit of God. For things that are, God hath; nor aught [is there] without Him, nor [is] He without aught.

10. These things should seem to thee, Asclepius, if thou dost understand them, true; but if thou dost not understand, things not to be believed.

To understand is to believe, to not believe is not to understand.

My word (logos) doth go before [thee] to the truth. But mighty is the mind, and when it hath been led by word up to a certain point, it hath the power to come before [thee] to the truth.

And having thought o'er all these things, and found them consonant with those which have already been translated by the reason, it hath [e'en now] believed, and found its rest in that Fair Faith.

To those, then, who by God[is good aid] do understand the things that have been said [by us] above, they're credible; but unto those who understand them not, incredible.

Let so much, then, suffice on thought-and-sense.

X. The Key

1. Hermes: My yesterday's discourse (logos) I did devote to thee, Asclepius, and so 'tis [only] right I should devote to thy's to Tat; and this the more because 'tis the abridgement of the General Sermons (Logoi) which he has had addressed to him.

"God, Father and the Good", then, Tat, hath the same nature, or more exactly, energy.

For nature is a predicate of growth, and used of things that change, both mobile and immobile, that is to say, both human and divine, each one of which He willeth into being.

But energy consists in something else, as we have shown in treating of the rest, both things divine and human things; which thing we ought to have in mind when treating of the Good.

2. God's energy is then His Will; further His essence is to will the being of all things. For what is "God and Father and the Good" but the "to be" of all that are not yet? Nay, subsistence self of everything that is; this, then, is God, this Father, this the Good; to Him is added naught of all the rest.

And though the Cosmos, that is to say the Sun, is also sire himself to them that share in him; yet so far is he not the cause of good unto the lives, he is not even of their living.

So that e'en if he be a sire, he is entirely so by compulsion of the Good's Good-will, apart from which nor being nor becoming could e'er be.

3. Again, the parent is the children's cause, both on the father's and the mother's side, only by sharing in the Good's desire [that doth pour] through the Sun. It is the Good which doeth the creating.

And such a power can be possessed by no one else than Him alone who taketh naught, but wills all things to be; I will not, Tat, say "makes".

For that the maker is defective for long periods (in which he sometimes makes, and sometimes doth not make) both in the quality and in the quantity [of what he makes]; in that he sometimes maketh them so many and such like, and sometimes the reverse.

But "God and Father and the Good" is [cause] for all to be. So are at least these things for those who can see.

4. For It doth will to be, and It is both Itself and most of all by reason of Itself. Indeed, all other things beside are just because of It; for the distinctive feature of the Good is "that it should be known". Such is the Good, O Tat.

The Corpus Hermeticum

Tat: Thou hast, O father, filled us so full of this so good and fairest sight, that thereby my mind's eye hath now become for me almost a thing to worship.

For that the vision of the Good doth not, like the sun's beam, firelike blaze on the eyes and make them close; nay, on the contrary, it shineth forth and maketh to increase the seeing of the eye, as far as e'er a man hath the capacity to hold the inflow of the radiance that the mind alone can see.

Not only does it come more swiftly down to us, but it does us no harm, and is instinct with all immortal life.

5. They who are able to drink in a somewhat more than others of this Sight, oftentimes from out the body fall asleep in this fairest Spectacle, as was the case with Uranus and Cronus, our forebears. may this be out lot too, O father mine!

Hermes: Yea, may it be, my son! But as it is, we are not yet strung to the Vision, and not as yet have we the power our mind's eye to unfold and gaze upon the Beauty of the Good – Beauty that naught can e'er corrupt or any comprehend.

For only then wilt thou upon It gaze when thou canst say no word concerning It. For Gnosis of the Good is holy silence and a giving holiday to every sense.

6. For neither can he who perceiveth It, perceive aught else; nor he who gazeth on It, gaze on aught else; nor hear aught else, nor stir his body any way. Staying his body's every sense and every motion he stayeth still.

And shining then all round his mond, It shines through his whole soul, and draws it out of body, transforming all of him to essence.

For it is possible, my son, that a man's soul should be made like to God, e'en while it still is in a body, if it doth contemplate the Beauty of the Good.

7. Tat: Made like to God? What dost thou, father, mean?

Hermes: Of every soul apart are transformations, son.

Tat: What meanest thou? Apart?

Hermes: Didst thou not, in the General Sermons, hear that from one Soul – the All-soul – come all these souls which are made to revolve in all the cosmos, as though divided off?

Of these souls, then, it is that there are many changes, some to a happier lot and some to [just] the contrary of this.

Thus some that were creeping things change into things that in the water dwell, the souls of water things change to earth-dwellers, those that live on earth change to things with wings, and souls that live in air change to men, while human souls reach the first step of deathlessness changed into daimones.

And so they circle to the choir of the Inerrant Gods; for of the Gods there are two choirs, the one Inerrant, and the other Errant. And this is the most perfect glory of the soul.

8. But if a soul on entering the body of a man persisteth in its vice, it neither tasteth deathlessness nor shareth in the Good; but speeding back again it turns into the path that leads to creeping things. This is the sentence of the vicious soul.

The Corpus Hermeticum

And the soul's vice is ignorance. For that the soul who hath no knowledge of the things that are, or knowledge of their nature, or of Good, is blinded by the body's passions and tossed about.

This wretched soul, not knowing what she is, becomes the slave of bodies of strange form in sorry plight, bearing the body as a load; not as the ruler, but the ruled. This [ignorance] is the soul's vice.

9. But on the other hand the virtue of the soul is Gnosis. For he who knows, he good and pious is, and still while on the earth divine.

Tat: But who is such an one, O father mine?

Hermes: He who doth not say much or lend his ear to much. For he who spendeth time in arguing and hearing arguments, doth shadow-fight. For "God, the Father and the Good", is not to be obtained by speech or hearing.

And yet though this is so, there are in all the beings senses, in that they cannot without senses be.

But Gnosis is far different from sense. For sense is brought about by that which hath the mastery o'er us, while Gnosis is the end of science, and science is God's gift.

10. All science is incorporeal, the instrument it uses being the mind, just as the mind employs the body.

Both then come into bodies, [I mean] both things that are cognizable by mind alone and things material. For all things must consist out of antithesis and contrariety; and this can otherwise not be.

Tat: Who then is this material God of whom thou speakest?

Hermes: Cosmos is beautiful, but is not good – for that it is material and freely passible; and though it is the first of all things passible, yet is it in the second rank of being and wanting in itself.

And though it never hath itself its birth in time, but ever is, yet is its being in becoming, becoming for all time the genesis of qualities and quantities; for it is mobile and all material motion's genesis.

11. It is intelligible rest that moves material motion in this way, since Cosmos is a sphere – that is to say, a head. And naught of head above's material, as naught of feet below's intelligible, but all material.

And head itself is moved in a sphere-like way – that is to say, as head should move, is mind.

All then that are united to the "tissue" of this "head" (in which is soul) are in their nature free from death – just as when body hath been made in soul, are things that hath more soul than body.

Whereas those things which are at greater distance from this "tissue" – there, where are things which have a greater share of body than of soul – are by their nature subject unto death.

The whole, however, is a life; so that the universe consists of both the hylic and of the intelligible.

12. Again, the Cosmos is the first of living things, while man is second after it, though first of things subject to death.

Man hath the same ensouling power in him as all the rest of living things; yet is he not only not good, but even evil, for that he's subject unto death.

The Corpus Hermeticum

For though the Cosmos also is not good in that it suffers motion, it is not evil, in that it is not subject to death. But man, in that he's subject both to motion and to death, is evil.

13. Now then the principles of man are this-wise vehicled: mind in the reason (logos), the reason in the soul, soul in the spirit, and spirit in the body.

Spirit pervading [body] by means of veins and arteries and blood, bestows upon the living creature motion, and as it were doth bear it in a way.

For this cause some do think the soul is blood, in that they do mistake its nature, not knowing that [at death] it is its spirit that must first withdraw into the soul, whereon the blood congeals and veins and arteries are emptied, and then the living creature is withdrawn; and this is body's death.

14. Now from one Source all things depend; while Source [dependeth] from the One and Only [One]. Source is, moreover, moved to become Source again; whereas the One standeth perpetually and is not moved.

Three then are they: "God, the Father and the Good", Cosmos and man.

God doth contain Cosmos; Cosmos [containeth] man. Cosmos is e'er God's Son, man as it were Cosmos' child.

15. Not that, however, God ignoreth man; nay, right well doth He know him, and willeth to be known.

This is the sole salvation for a man – God's Gnosis. This is the Way Up to the Mount.

By Him alone the soul becometh good, not whiles is good, whiles evil, but [good] out of necessity.

Tat: What dost thou mean, Thrice-greatest one?

Hermes: Behold an infant's soul, my son, that is not yet cut off, because its body is still small and not as yet come unto its full bulk.

Tat: How?

Hermes: A thing of beauty altogether is [such a soul] to see, not yet befouled by body's passions, still all but hanging from the Cosmic Soul!

But when the body grows in bulk and draweth down the soul into its mass, then doth the soul cut off itself and bring upon itself forgetfulness, and no more shareth in the Beautiful and the Good. And this forgetfulness becometh vice.

16. It is the same for them who go out from the body.

For when the soul withdraws into itself, the spirit doth contract itself within the blood, and the soul within the spirit. And then the mind, stripped of its wrappings, and naturally divine, taking unto itself a fiery body, doth traverse every space, after abandoning the soul unto its judgement and whatever chastisement it hath deserved.

Tat: What dost thou, father, mean by this? The mind is parted from soul and soul from spirit? Whereas thou said'st the soul was the mind's vesture, and the soul's the spirit.

17. Hermes: The hearer, son, should think with him who speaks and breathe with him; nay, he should have a hearing subtler than the voice of him who speaks.

It is, son, in a body made of earth that this arrangement of the vestures comes to pass. For in a body made of earth it is impossible the mind should take its seat itself by its own self in nakedness.

For neither is it possible on the one hand the earthly body should contain so much immortality, nor on the other that so great a virtue should endure a body passible in such close contact with it. It taketh, then, the soul for as it were an envelope.

And soul itself, being too and thing divine, doth use the spirit as its envelope, while spirit doth pervade the living creature.

18. When then the mind doth free itself from the earth-body, it straightway putteth on its proper robe of fire, with which it could not dwell in an earth-body.

For earth doth not bear fire; for it is all set in a blaze even by a small spark. And for this cause is water poured around earth, to be a guard and wall, to keep the blazing of the fire away.

But mind, the swiftest thing of all divine outthinkings, and swifter than all elements, hath for its body fire.

For mind being builder doth use the fire as tool for the construction of all things – the Mind of all [for the construction] of all things, but that of man only for things on earth.

Stript of its fire the mind on earth cannot make things divine, for it is human in its dispensation.

19. The soul in man, however – not every soul, but one that pious is – is a daimonic something and divine.

And such a soul when from the body freed, if it have fought the fight of piety – the fight of piety is to know God and to do wrong to no man – such a soul becomes entirely mind.

Whereas the impious soul remains in its own essence, chastised by its own self, and seeking for an earthly body where to enter, if only it be human.

For that no other body can contain a human soul; nor is it right that any human soul should fall into the body of a thing that doth possess no reason. For that the law of God is this: to guard the human soul from such tremendous outrage.

20. Tat: How father, then, is a man's soul chastised?

Hermes: What greater chastisement of any human soul can there be, son, than lack of piety? What fire has so fierce a flame as lack of piety? What ravenous beast so mauls the body as lack of piety the very soul?

Dost thou not see what hosts of ills the impious soul doth bear?

It shrieks and screams: I burn; I am ablaze; I know not what to cry or do; ah, wretched me, I am devoured by all the ills that compass me about; alack, poor me, I neither see nor hear!

Such are the cries wrung from a soul chastised; not, as the many think, and thou, son, dost suppose, that a [man's] soul, passing from body, is changed into a beast.

Such is a very grave mistake, for that the way a soul doth suffer chastisement is this:

21. When mind becomes a daimon, the law requires that it should take a fiery body to execute the services of God; and entering in the soul most impious it scourgeth it with whips made of its sins.

And then the impious soul, scourged with its sins, is plunged in murders, outrage, blasphemy, in violence of all kinds, and all the other things whereby mankind is wronged.

But on the pious soul the mind doth mount and guide it to the Gnosis' Light. And such a soul doth never tire in songs of praise [to God] and pouring blessing on all men, and doing good in word and deed to all, in imitation of its Sire.

22. Wherefore, my son, thou shouldst give praise to God and pray that thou mayst have thy mind Good Mind. It is, then, to a better state the soul doth pass; it cannot to a worse.

Further there is an intercourse of souls; those of the gods have intercourse with those of men, and those of men with souls of creatures which possess no reason.

The higher, further, have in charge the lower; the gods look after men, men after animals irrational, while God hath charge of all; for He is higher than them all and all are less than He.

Cosmos is subject, then, to God, man to the Cosmos, and irrationals to man. But God is o'er them all, and God contains them all.

God's rays, to use a figure, are His energies; the Cosmos's are natures, the arts and sciences are man's.

The energies act through the Cosmos, thence through the nature-rays of Cosmos upon man; the nature-rays [act] through the elements, man [acteth] through the sciences and arts.

23. This is the dispensation of the universe, depending from the nature of the One, pervading [all things] through the Mind, than which is naught diviner nor of greater energy; and naught a greater means for the at-oning men to gods and gods to men.

He, [Mind,] is the Good Daimon. Blessed the soul that is most filled with Him, and wretched is the soul that's empty of the Mind.

Tat: Father, what dost thou mean, again?

Hermes: Dost think then, son, that every soul hath the Good [Mind]? For 'tis of Him we speak, not of the mind in service of which we were just speaking, the mind sent down for [the soul's] chastisement.

24. For soul without the mind "can neither speak nor act". For oftentimes the mind doth leave the soul, and at that time the soul neither sees nor understands, but is just like a thing that hath no reason. Such is the power of mind.

Yet doth it not endure a sluggish soul, but leaveth such a soul tied to the body and bound tight down by it. Such soul, my son, doth not have Mind; and therefore such an one should not be called a man. For that man is a thing-of-life divine; man is not measured with the rest of lives of things upon the earth, but with the lives above in heaven, who are called gods.

Nay more, if we must boldly speak the truth, the true "man" is e'en higher than the gods, or at the [very] least the gods and men are very whit in power each with the other equal.

25. For no one of the gods in heaven shall come down to the earth, o'er-stepping heaven's limit; whereas man doth mount up to heaven and measure it; he knows what things of it are high, what things are low, and learns precisely all things else besides. And greater thing than all; without e'en quitting earth, he doth ascend above. So vast a sweep doth he possess of ecstasy.

For this cause can a man dare say that man on earth is god subject to death, while god in heaven is man from death immune.

Wherefore the dispensation of all things is brought about by means of there, the twain – Cosmos and Man – but by the One.

XI. Mind Unto Hermes

1. Mind: Master this sermon (logos), then, Thrice-greatest Hermes, and bear in mind the spoken words; and as it hath come unto Me to speak, I will no more delay.

Hermes: As many men say many things, and these diverse, about the All and Good, I have not learned the truth. Make it, then, clear to me, O Master mine! For I can trust the explanation of these things, which comes from Thee alone.

2. Mind: Hear [then], My son, how standeth God and All.

God; Aeon; Cosmos; Time; Becoming.

God maketh Aeon; Aeon, Cosmos; Cosmos, Time; and Time, Becoming.

The Good – the Beautiful, Wisdom, Blessedness – is essence, as it were, of God; of Aeon, Sameness; of Cosmos, Order; of Time, Change; and of Becoming, Life and Death.

The energies of God are Mind and Soul; of Aeon, lastingness and deathlessness; of Cosmos, restoration and the opposite thereof; of Time, increase and decrease; and of Becoming, quality.

Aeon is, then, in God; Cosmos, in Aeon; in Cosmos; Time; in Time, Becoming.

Aeon stands firm round God; Cosmos is moved in Aeon; Time hath its limits in the Cosmos; Becoming doth become in Time.

3. The source, therefore, of all is God; their essence, Aeon; their matter, Cosmos.

God's power is Aeon; Aeon's work is Cosmos – which never hath become, yet ever doth become by Aeon.

Therefore will Cosmos never be destroyed, for Aeon's indestructible; nor doth a whit of things in Cosmos perish, for Cosmos is enwrapped by Aeon round on every side.

Hermes: But God's Wisdom – what is that?

Mind: The Good and Beautiful, and Blessedness, and Virtue's all, and Aeon.

The Corpus Hermeticum

Aeon, then, ordereth [Cosmos], imparting deathlessness and lastingness to matter.

4. For its beginning doth depend on Aeon, as Aeon doth on God.

Now Genesis and Time, in Heaven and upon the Earth, are of two natures.

In Heaven they are unchangeable and indestructible, but on the Earth they're subject unto change and to destruction.

Further, the Aeon's soul is God; the Cosmos' soul is Aeon; the Earth's soul, Heaven.

And God in Mind; and Mind, in Soul; and Soul, in Matter; and all of them through Aeon.

But all this Body, in which are all the bodies, is full of Soul; and Soul is full of Mind, and Mind of God.

It fills it from within, and from without encircles it, making the All to live.

Without, this vast and perfect Life [encircles] Cosmos; within, it fills [it with] all lives; above, in Heaven, continuing in sameness; below, on Earth, changing becoming.

5. And Aeon doth preserve this [Cosmos], or by Necessity, or by Foreknowledge, or by Nature, or by whatever else a man supposes or shall suppose. And all is this – God energizing.

The Energy of God is Power that naught can e'er surpass, a Power with which no one can make comparison of any human thing at all, or any thing divine.

Wherefore, O Hermes, never think that aught of things above or things below is like to God, for thou wilt fall from truth. For naught is like to That which hath no like, and is Alone and One.

And do not ever think that any other can possibly possess His power; for what apart from Him is there of life, and deathlessness and change of quality? For what else should He make?

God's not inactive, since all things [then] would lack activity; for all are full of God.

But neither in the Cosmos anywhere, nor in aught else, is there inaction. For that "inaction" is a name that cannot be applied to either what doth make or what is made.

6. But all things must be made; both ever made, and also in accordance with the influence of every space.

For He who makes, is in them all; not stablished in some one of them, nor making one thing only, but making all.

For being Power, He energizeth in the things He makes and is not independent of them – although the things He makes are subject to Him.

Now gaze through Me upon the Cosmos that's now subject to thy sight; regard its Beauty carefully – Body in pure perfection, though one than which there's no more ancient one, ever in prime of life, and ever-young, nay, rather, in even fuller and yet fuller prime!

7. Behold, again, the seven subject Worlds; ordered by Aeon's order, and with their varied course full-filling Aeon!

The Corpus Hermeticum

[See how] all things [are] full of light, and nowhere [is there] fire; for 'tis the love and the blending of the contraries and the dissimilars that doth give birth to light down shining by the energy of God, the Father of all good, the Leader of all order, and Ruler of the seven world-orderings!

[Behold] the Moon, forerunner of them all, the instrument of nature, and the transmuter of its lower matter!

[Look at] the Earth set in the midst of All, foundation of the Cosmos Beautiful, feeder and nurse of things on Earth!

And contemplate the multitude of deathless lives, how great it is, and that of lives subject to death; and midway, between both, immortal [lives] and mortal, [see thou] the circling Moon.

8. And all are full of soul, and all are moved by it, each in its proper way; some round the Heaven, others around the Earth; [see] how the right [move] not unto the left, nor yet the left unto the right; nor the above below, nor the below above.

And that all there are subject unto Genesis, My dearest Hermes, thou hast no longer need to learn of Me. For that they bodies are, have souls, and they are moved.

But 'tis impossible for them to come together into one without some one to bring them [all] together. It must, then, be that such a one as this must be some one who's wholly One.

9. For as the many motions of them [all] are different, and as their bodies are not like, yet has one speed been ordered for them all, it is impossible that there should be two or more makers for them.

For that one single order is not kept among "the many"; but rivalry will follow of the weaker with the stronger, and they will strive.

And if the maker of the lives that suffer change and death, should be another, he would desire to make the deathless ones as well; just as the maker of the deathless ones, [to make the lives] that suffer death.

But come! if there be two – if matter's one, and Soul is one, in whose hands would there be the distribution for the making? Again, if both of them have some of it, in whose hands may be the greater part?

10. But thus conceive it, then; that every living body doth consist of soul and matter, whether [that body be] of an immortal, or a mortal, or an irrational [life].

For that all living bodies are ensouled; whereas, upon the other hand, those that live not, are matter by itself.

And, in like fashion, Soul when in its self is, after its own maker, cause of life; but the cause of all life is He who makes the things that cannot die.

Hermes: How, then, is it that, first, lives subject to death are other than the deathless ones? And, next, how is it that Life which knows no death, and maketh deathlessness, doth not make animals immortal?

11. Mind: First, that there is some one who does these things, is clear; and, next, that He is also One, is very manifest. For, also, Soul is one, and Life is one, and Matter one.

Hermes: But who is He?

Mind: Who may it other be than the One God? Whom else should it beseem to put Soul into lives but God alone? One, then, is God.

It would indeed be most ridiculous, if when thou dost confess the Cosmos to be one, Sun one, Moon one, and Godhead one, thou shouldst wish God Himself to be some one or other of a number!

12. All things, therefore, He makes, in many [ways]. And what great thing is it for God to make life, soul, and deathlessness, and change, when thou [thyself] dost do so many things?

For thou dost see, and speak, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch, and walk, and think, and breathe. And it is not one man who smells, another one who walks, another one who thinks, and [yet] another one who breathes. But one is he who doth all these.

And yet no one of these could be apart from God. For just as, should thou cease from these, thou wouldst no longer be a living thing, so also, should God cease from them (a thing not law to say), no longer is He God.

13. For if it hath been shown that no thing can [inactive] be, how much less God? For if there's aught he doth not make (if it be law to say), He is imperfect. But if He is not only not inactive, but perfect [God], then He doth make all things.

Give thou thyself to Me, My Hermes, for a little while, and thou shalt understand more easily how that God's work is one, in order that all things may be – that are being made, or once have been, or that are going to be made. And this is, My beloved, Life; this is the Beautiful; this is the Good; this, God.

14. And if thou wouldst in practice understand [this work], behold what taketh place with thee desiring to beget. Yet this is not like unto that, for He doth not enjoy.

For that indeed He hath no other one to share in what He works, for working by Himself, He ever is at work, Himself being what He doth. For did He separate Himself from it, all things would [then] collapse, and all must die, Life ceasing.

But if all things are lives, and also Life is one; then, one is God. And, furthermore, if all are lives, both those in Heaven and those on Earth, and One Life in them all is made to be by God, and God is it – then, all are made by God.

Life is the making-one of Mind and Soul; accordingly Death is not the destruction of those that are at-oned, but the dissolving of their union.

15. Aeon, moreover, is God's image; Cosmos [is] Aeon's; the Sun, of Cosmos; and Man, [the image] of the Sun.

The people call change death, because the body is dissolved, and life, when it's dissolved, withdraws to the unmanifest. But in this sermon (logos), Hermes, My beloved, as thou dost hear, I say the Cosmos also suffers change – for that a part of it each day is made to be in the unmanifest – yet it is ne'er dissolved.

These are the passions of the Cosmos – revolvings and concealments; revolving is conversion and concealment renovation.

16. The Cosmos is all-formed – not having forms external to itself, but changing them itself within itself. Since, then, Cosmos is made to be all-formed, what may its maker be? For that, on the one hand, He should not be void of all form; and, on the other hand, if He's all-formed, He will be like the Cosmos. Whereas,

again, has He a single form, He will thereby be less than Cosmos.

What, then, say we He is? – that we may not bring round our sermon (logos) into doubt; for naught that mind conceives of God is doubtful.

He, then, hath one idea, which is His own alone, which doth not fall beneath the sight, being bodiless, and [yet] by means of bodies manifesteth all [ideas]. And marvel not that there's a bodiless idea.

17. For it is like the form of reason (logos) and mountain-tops in pictures. For they appear to stand out strongly from the rest, but really are quite smooth and flat.

And now consider what is said more boldly, but more truly!

Just as man cannot live apart from Life, so neither can God live without [His] doing good. For this is as it were the life and motion as it were of God – to move all things and make them live.

18. Now some of the things said should bear a sense peculiar to themselves. So understand, for instance, what I'm going to say.

All are in God, [but] not as lying in a place. For place is both a body and immovable, and things that lie do not have motion.

Now things lie one way in the bodiless, another way in being made manifest.

Think, [then,] of Him who doth contain them all; and think, that than the bodiless naught is more comprehensive, or swifter, or more potent, but it is the most comprehensive, the swiftest, and most potent of them all.

19. And, thus, think from thyself, and bid thy soul go unto any land, and there more quickly than thy bidding will it be. And bid it journey oceanwards; and there, again, immediately 'twill be, not as if passing on from place to place, but as if being there.

And bid it also mount to heaven; and it will need no wings, nor will aught hinder it, nor fire of sun, nor aether, nor vortex-swirl, nor bodies of the other stars; but, cutting through them all, it will soar up to the last Body [of them all]. And shouldst thou will to break through this as well, and contemplate what is beyond – if there be aught beyond the Cosmos; it is permitted thee.

20. Behold what power, what swiftness, thou dost have! And canst thou do all of these things, and God not [do them]?

Then, in this way know God; as having all things in Himself as thoughts, the whole Cosmos itself.

If, then, thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable unto like [alone].

Make, [then,] thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure; leap forth from every body; transcend all time; become Eternity; and [thus] shalt thou know God.

Conceiving nothing is impossible unto thyself, think thyself deathless and able to know all – all arts, all sciences, the way of every life.

Become more lofty than all height, and lower than all depth. Collect into thyself all senses of [all] creatures – of fire, [and] water, dry and moist. Think that thou art at the same time in every place – in earth, in sea, in sky; not yet begotten, in the womb, young, old, [and] dead, in after-death conditions.

And if thou knowest all these things at once – times, places, doings, qualities, and quantities; thou canst know God.

21. But if thou lockest up thy soul within thy body, and dost debase it, saying: I nothing know; I nothing can; I fear the sea; I cannot scale the sky; I know not who I was, who I shall be – what is there [then] between [thy] God and thee?

For thou canst know naught of things beautiful and good so long as thou dost love thy body and art bad.

The greatest bad there is, is not to know God's Good; but to be able to know [Good], and will, and hope, is a Straight Way, the Good's own [Path], both leading there and easy.

If thou but settest thy foot thereon, 'twill meet thee everywhere, 'twill everywhere be seen, both where and when thou dost expect it not – waking, sleeping, sailing, journeying, by night, by day, speaking, [and] saying naught. For there is naught that is not image of the Good.

22. Hermes: Is God unseen?

Mind: Hush! Who is more manifest than He? For this one reason hath He made all things, that through them all thou mayest see Him.

This is the Good of God, this [is] His Virtue – that He may be manifest through all.

For naught's unseen, even of things that are without a body. Mind sees itself in thinking, God in making.

So far these things have been made manifest to thee, Thrice-greatest one! Reflect on all the rest in the same way with thyself, and thou shalt not be led astray.

XII. About The Common Mind

1. Hermes: The Mind, O Tat, is of God's very essence – (if such a thing as essence of God there be) – and what that is, it and it only knows precisely.

The Mind, then, is not separated off from God's essentiality, but is united to it, as light to sun.

This Mind in men is God, and for this cause some of mankind are gods, and their humanity is nigh unto divinity.

For the Good Daimon said: "Gods are immortal men, and men are mortal gods."

2. But in irrational lives Mind is their nature. For where is Soul, there too is Mind; just as where Life, there is there also Soul.

But in irrational lives their soul is life devoid of mind; for Mind is the in-worker of the souls of men for good – He works on them for their own good.

In lives irrational He doth co-operate with each one's nature; but in the souls of men He counteracteth them.

For every soul, when it becomes embodied, is instantly depraved by pleasure and by pain.

For in a compound body, just like juices, pain and pleasure seethe, and into them the soul, on entering in, is

plunged.

3. O'er whatsoever souls the Mind doth, then, preside, to these it showeth its own light, by acting counter to their prepossessions, just as a good physician doth upon the body prepossessed by sickness, pain inflict, burning or lancing it for sake of health.

In just the selfsame way the Mind inflicteth pain on the soul, to rescue it from pleasure, whence comes its every ill.

The great ill of the soul is godlessness; then followeth fancy for all evil things and nothing good.

So, then, Mind counteracting it doth work good on the soul, as the physician health upon the body.

4. But whatsoever human souls have not the Mind as pilot, they share in the same fate as souls of lives irrational.

For [Mind] becomes co-worker with them, giving full play to the desires toward which [such souls] are borne – [desires] that from the rush of lust strain after the irrational; [so that such human souls,] just like irrational animals, cease not irrationally to rage and lust, nor are they ever satiate of ills.

For passions and irrational desires are ills exceeding great; and over these God hath set up the Mind to play the part of judge and executioner.

5. Tat: In that case, father mine, the teaching (logos) as to Fate, which previously thou didst explain to me, risks to be overset.

For that if it be absolutely fated for a man to fornicate, or commit sacrilege, or do some other evil deed, why is he punished – when he hath done the deed from Fate's necessity?

Hermes: All works, my son, are Fate's; and without Fate naught of things corporal – or good, or ill – can come to pass.

But it is fated, too, that he who doeth ill, shall suffer. And for this cause he doth it – that he may suffer what he suffereth, because he did it.

6. But for the moment, [Tat,] let be the teaching as to vice and Fate, for we have spoken of these things in other [of our sermons]; but now our teaching (logos) is about the Mind: – what Mind can do, and how it is [so] different – in men being such and such, and in irrational lives [so] changed; and [then] again that in irrational lives it is not of a beneficial nature, while that in men it quencheth out the wrathful and the lustful elements.

Of men, again, we must class some as led by reason, and others as unreasoning.

7. But all men are subject to Fate, and genesis and change, for these are the beginning and the end of Fate.

And though all men do suffer fated things, those led by reason (those whom we said Mind doth guide) do not endure like suffering with the rest; but, since they've freed themselves from viciousness, not being bad, they do not suffer bad.

Tat: How meanest thou again, my father? Is not the fornicator bad; the murderer bad; and [so with] all the rest?

Hermes: [I meant not that;] but that the Mind-led man, my son, though not a fornicator, will suffer just as though he had committed fornication, and though he be no murderer, as though he had committed murder.

The quality of change he can no more escape than that of genesis.

But it is possible for one who hath the Mind, to free himself from vice.

8. Wherefore I've ever heard, my son, Good Daimon also say – (and had He set it down in written words, He would have greatly helped the race of men; for He alone, my son, doth truly, as the Firstborn God, gazing on all things, give voice to words (logoi) divine) – yea, once I heard Him say:

"All things are one, and most of all the bodies which the mind alone perceives. Our life is owing to [God's] Energy and Power and Aeon. His Mind is good, so is His Soul as well. And this being so, intelligible things know naught of separation. So, then, Mind, being Ruler of all things, and being Soul of God, can do whate'er

it wills."

9. So do thou understand, and carry back this word (logos) unto the question thou didst ask before – I mean about Mind's Fate.

For if thou dost with accuracy, son, eliminate [all] captious arguments (logoi), thou wilt discover that of very truth the Mind, the Soul of God, doth rule o'er all – o'er Fate, and Law, and all things else; and nothing is impossible to it – neither o'er Fate to set a human soul, nor under Fate to set [a soul] neglectful of what comes to pass. Let this so far suffice from the Good Daimon's most good [words].

Tat: Yea, [words] divinely spoken, father mine, truly and helpfully. But further still explain me this.

10. Thou said'st that Mind in lives irrational worked in them as [their] nature, co-working with their impulses.

But impulses of lives irrational, as I do think, are passions.

Now if the Mind co-worketh with [these] impulses, and if the impulses of [lives] irrational be passions, then is Mind also passion, taking its color from the passions.

Hermes: Well put, my son! Thou questionest right nobly, and it is just that I as well should answer [nobly].

11. All things incorporeal when in a body are subject unto passion, and in the proper sense they are [themselves] all passions.

For every thing that moves itself is incorporeal; while every thing that's moved is body.

Incorporeals are further moved by Mind, and movement's passion.

Both, then, are subject unto passion – both mover and the moved, the former being ruler and the latter ruled.

But when a man hath freed himself from body, then is he also freed from passion.

But, more precisely, son, naught is impassible, but all are passible.

Yet passion differeth from passibility; for that the one is active, while the other's passive.

Incorporeals moreover act upon themselves, for either they are motionless or they are moved; but whichsoever it be, it's passion.

But bodies are invariably acted on, and therefore they are passible.

Do not, then, let terms trouble thee; action and passion are both the selfsame thing. To use the fairer sounding term, however, does no harm.

12. Tat: Most clearly hast thou, father mine, set forth the teaching (logos).

Hermes: Consider this as well, my son; that these two things God hath bestowed on man beyond all mortal lives – both mind and speech (logos) equal to immortality. He hath the mind for knowing God and uttered speech (logos) for eulogy of Him.

And if one useth these for what he ought, he'll differ not a whit from the immortals. Nay, rather, on departing from the body, he will be guided by the twain unto the Choir of Gods and Blessed Ones.

13. Tat: Why, father mine! – do not the other lives make use of speech (logos)?

Hermes: Nay, son; but use of voice; speech is far different from voice. For speech is general among all men, while voice doth differ in each class of living thing.

Tat: But with men also, father mine, according to each race, speech differs.

Hermes: Yea, son, but man is one; so also speech is one and is interpreted, and it is found the same in Egypt, and in Persia, and in Greece.

Thou seemest, son, to be in ignorance of Reason's (Logos) worth and greatness. For that the Blessed God, Good Daimon, hath declared:

"Soul is in Body, Mind in Soul; but Reason (Logos) is in Mind, and Mind in God; and God is Father of [all] these."

14. The Reason, then, is the Mind's image, and Mind God's [image]; while Body is [the image] of the Form; and Form [the image] of the Soul.

The subtlest part of Matter is, then, Air; of Air, Soul; of Soul, Mind; and of Mind, God.
And God surroundeth all and permeateth all; while Mind Surroundeth Soul, Soul Air, Air Matter.
Necessity and Providence and Nature are instruments of Cosmos and of Matter's ordering; while of intelligible things each is Essence, and Sameness is their Essence.
But of the bodies of the Cosmos each is many; for through possessing Sameness, [these] composed bodies, though they do change from one into another of themselves, do nonetheless keep the incorruption of their Sameness.

15. Whereas in all the rest of composed bodies, of each there is a certain number; for without number structure cannot be, or composition, or decomposition.
Now it is units that give birth to number and increase it, and, being decomposed, are taken back again into themselves.
Matter is one; and this whole Cosmos – the mighty God and image of the mightier One, both with Him unified, and the conserver of the Will and Order of the Father – is filled full of Life.
Naught is there in it throughout the whole of Aeon, the Father's [everlasting] Re-establishment – nor of the whole, nor of the parts – which doth not live.
For not a single thing that's dead, hath been, or is, or shall be in [this] Cosmos.
For that the Father willed it should have Life as long as it should be. Wherefore it needs must be a God.

16. How then, O son, could there be in the God, the image of the Father, in the plenitude of Life – dead things?
For that death is corruption, and corruption destruction.
How then could any part of that which knoweth no corruption be corrupted, or any whit of him the God destroyed?
Tat: Do they not, then, my father, die – the lives in it, that are its parts?
Hermes: Hush, son! – led into error by the term in use for what takes place.
They do not die, my son, but are dissolved as compound bodies.
Now dissolution is not death, but dissolution of a compound; it is dissolved not so that it may be destroyed, but that it may become renewed.
For what is the activity of life? Is it not motion? What then in Cosmos is there that hath no motion? Naught is there, son!

17. Tat: Doth not Earth even, father, seem to thee to have no motion?
Hermes: Nay, son; but rather that she is the only thing which, though in very rapid motion, is also stable.
For how would it not be a thing to laugh at, that the Nurse of all should have no motion, when she engenders and brings forth all things?
For 'tis impossible that without motion one who doth engender, should do so.
That thou should ask if the fourth part is not inert, is most ridiculous; for the body which doth have no motion, gives sign of nothing but inertia.

18. Know, therefore, generally, my son, that all that is in Cosmos is being moved for increase or for decrease.
Now that which is kept moving, also lives; but there is no necessity that that which lives, should be all same.
For being simultaneous, the Cosmos, as a whole, is not subject to change, my son, but all its parts are subject unto it; yet naught [of it] is subject to corruption, or destroyed.
It is the terms employed that confuse men. For 'tis not genesis that constituteth life, but 'tis sensation; it is not change that constituteth death, but 'tis forgetfulness.
Since, then, these things are so, they are immortal all – Matter, [and] Life, [and] Spirit, Mind [and] Soul, of which whatever liveth, is composed.

19. Whatever then doth live, oweth its immortality unto the Mind, and most of all doth man, he who is both recipient of God, and co-essential with Him.

For with this life alone doth God consort; by visions in the night, by tokens in the day, and by all things doth He foretell the future unto him – by birds, by inward parts, by wind, by tree.
Wherefore doth man lay claim to know things past, things present and to come.

20. Observe this too, my son; that each one of the other lives inhabiteth one portion of the Cosmos – aquatic creatures water, terrene earth, and aery creatures air; while man doth use all these – earth, water air [and] fire; he seeth Heaven, too, and doth contact it with [his] sense.
But God surroundeth all, and permeateth all, for He is energy and power; and it is nothing difficult, my son, to conceive God.

21. But if thou wouldst Him also contemplate, behold the ordering of the Cosmos, and [see] the orderly behavior of its ordering; behold thou the Necessity of things made manifest, and [see] the Providence of things become and things becoming; behold how Matter is all-full of Life; [behold] this so great God in movement, with all the good and noble [ones] – gods, daimones and men!

Tat: But these are purely energies, O father mine!

Hermes: If, then, they're purely energies, my son – by whom, then, are they energized except by God? Or art thou ignorant, that just as Heaven, Earth, Water, Air, are parts of Cosmos, in just the selfsame way God's parts are Life and Immortality, [and] Energy, and Spirit, and Necessity, and Providence, and Nature, Soul, and Mind, and the Duration of all these that is called Good?

And there are naught of things that have become, or are becoming, in which God is not.

22. Tat: Is He in Matter, father, then?

Hermes: Matter, my son, is separate from God, in order that thou may'st attribute to it the quality of space. But what thing else than mass think'st thou it is, if it's not energized? Whereas if it be energized, by whom is it made so? For energies, we said, are parts of God.

By whom are, then, all lives enlivened? By whom are things immortal made immortal? By whom changed things made changeable?

And whether thou dost speak of Matter, of Body, or of Essence, know that these too are energies of God; and that materiality is Matter's energy, that corporeality is Bodies' energy, and that essentiality doth constituteth the energy of Essence; and this is God – the All.

23. And in the All is naught that is not God. Wherefore nor size, nor space, nor quality, nor form, nor time, surroundeth God; for He is All, and All surroundeth all, and permeateth all.

Unto this Reason (Logos), son, thy adoration and thy worship pay. There is one way alone to worship God; [it is] not to be bad.

XIII. The Secret Sermon on the Mountain

1. Tat: [Now] in the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity; and when thou saidst no man could e'er be saved before Rebirth, thy meaning thou didst hide.

Further, when I became thy Suppliant, in Wending up the Mount, after thou hadst conversed with me, and when I longed to learn the Sermon (Logos) on Rebirth (for this beyond all other things is just the thing I know not), thou saidst, that thou wouldst give it me – "when thou shalt have become a stranger to the world".

Wherefore I got me ready and made the thought in me a stranger to the world-illusion.

And now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me with what thou saidst would give me the tradition of Rebirth, setting it forth in speech or in the secret way.

I know not, O Thrice-greatest one, from out what matter and what womb Man comes to birth, or of what seed.

2. Hermes: Wisdom that understands in silence [such is the matter and the womb from out which Man is born], and the True Good the seed.

Tat: Who is the sower, father? For I am altogether at a loss.

Hermes: It is the Will of God, my son.

Tat: And of what kind is he that is begotten, father? For I have no share of that essence in me, which doth transcend the senses. The one that is begot will be another one from God, God's Son?

Hermes: All in all, out of all powers composed.

Tat: Thou tellest me a riddle, father, and dost not speak as father unto son.

Hermes: This Race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God.

3. Tat: Thou sayest things impossible, O father, things that are forced. Hence answers would I have direct unto these things. Am I a son strange to my father's race?

Keep it not, father, back from me. I am a true-born son; explain to me the manner of Rebirth.

Hermes: What may I say, my son? I can but tell thee this. Whene'er I see within myself the Simple Vision brought to birth out of God's mercy, I have passed through myself into a Body that can never die. And now I am not as I was before; but I am born in Mind.

The way to do this is not taught, and it cannot be seen by the compounded element by means of which thou seest.

Yea, I have had my former composed form dismembered for me. I am no longer touched, but I have touch; I have dimension too; and [yet] am I a stranger to them now.

Thou seest me with eyes, my son; but what I am thou dost not understand [even] with fullest strain of body and of sight.

4. Tat: Into fierce frenzy and mind-fury hast thou plunged me, father, for now no longer do I see myself.

Hermes: I would, my son, that thou hadst e'en passed right through thyself, as they who dream in sleep yet sleepless.

Tat: Tell me this too! Who is the author of Rebirth?

Hermes: The Son of God, the One Man, by God's Will.

5. Tat: Now hast thou brought me, father, unto pure stupefaction. Arrested from the senses which I had before,... for [now] I see thy Greatness identical with thy distinctive form.

Hermes: Even in this thou art untrue; the mortal form doth change with every day. 'Tis turned by time to growth and waning, as being an untrue thing.

6. Tat: What then is true, Thrice-greatest One?

Hermes: That which is never troubled, son, which cannot be defined; that which no color hath, nor any figure, which is not turned, which hath no garment, which giveth light; that which is comprehensible unto itself [alone], which doth not suffer change; that which no body can contain.

Tat: In very truth I lose my reason, father. Just when I thought to be made wise by thee, I find the senses of this mind of mine blocked up.

Hermes: Thus is it, son: That which is upward borne like fire, yet is borne down like earth, that which is moist like water, yet blows like air, how shalt thou this perceive with sense – the that which is not solid nor yet moist, which naught can bind or loose, of which in power and energy alone can man have any notion – and even then it wants a man who can perceive the Way of Birth in God?

7. Tat: I am incapable of this, O father, then?

Hermes: Nay, God forbid, my son! Withdraw into thyself, and it will come; will, and it comes to pass; throw out of work the body's senses, and thy Divinity shall come to birth; purge from thyself the brutish torments – things of matter.

Tat: I have tormentors then in me, O father?

Hermes: Ay, no few, my son; nay, fearful ones and manifold.

Tat: I do not know them, father.

Hermes: Torment the first is this Not-knowing, son; the second one is Grief; the third, Intemperance; the fourth, Concupiscence; the fifth, Unrighteousness; the sixth is Avarice; the seventh, Error; the eighth is Envy; the ninth, Guile; the tenth is Anger; eleventh, Rashness; the twelfth is Malice.

These are in number twelve; but under them are many more, my son; and creeping through the prison of the body they force the man that's placed therein to suffer in his senses. But they depart (though not all at once) from him who hath been taken pity on by God; and this it is which constitutes the manner of Rebirth. And... the Reason (Logos).

8. And now, my son, be still and solemn silence keep! Thus shall the mercy that flows on us from God not cease.

Henceforth rejoice, O son, for by the Powers of God thou art being purified for the articulation of the Reason (Logos).

Gnosis of God hath come to us, and when this comes, my son, Not-knowing is cast out.

Gnosis of Joy hath come to us, and on its coming, son, Sorrow will flee away to them who give it room. The Power that follows Joy do I invoke, thy Self-control. O Power most sweet! Let us most gladly bid it welcome, son! How with its coming doth it chase Intemperance away!

9. Now fourth, on Continenence I call, the Power against Desire. This step, my son, is Righteousness' firm seat. For without judgement see how she hath chased Unrighteousness away. We are made righteous, son, by the departure of Unrighteousness.

Power sixth I call to us – that against Avarice, Sharing-with-all.

And now that Avarice is gone, I call on Truth. And Error flees, and Truth is with us.

See how [the measure of] the Good is full, my son, upon Truth's coming. For Envy is gone from us; and unto Truth is joined the Good as well, with Life and Light.

And now no more doth any torment of the Darkness venture nigh, but vanquished [all] have fled with whirring wings.

10. Thou knowest [now], my son, the manner of Rebirth. And when the Ten is come, my son, that driveth out the Twelve, the Birth in understanding is complete, and by this birth we are made into Gods.

Who then doth by His mercy gain this Birth in God, abandoning the body's senses, knows himself [to be of Light and Life] and that he doth consist of these, and [thus] is filled with bliss.

11. Tat: By God made steadfast, father, no longer with the sight my eyes afford I look on things, but with the energy the Mind doth give me through the Powers.

In Heaven am I, in earth, in water, air; I am in animals, in plants; I'm in the womb, before the womb, after the womb; I'm everywhere!

But further tell me this: How are the torments of the Darkness, when they are twelve in number, driven out by the ten Powers? What is the way of it, Thrice-greatest one?

12. Hermes: This dwelling-place through which we have just passed, my son, is constituted from the circle of the twelve types-of-life, this being composed of elements, twelve in number, but of one nature, an omniform idea. For man's delusion there are disunions in them, son, while in their action they are one. Not only can we never part Rashness from Wrath; they cannot even be distinguished.

According to right reason (logos), then, they naturally withdraw once and for all, in as much as they are chased out by no less than ten powers, that is, the Ten.

For, son, the Ten is that which giveth birth to souls. And Life and Light are unified there, where the One hath being from the Spirit. According then to reason (logos) the One contains the Ten, the Ten the One.

13. Tat: Father, I see the All, I see myself in Mind.

Hermes: This is, my son, Rebirth – no more to look on things from body's view-point (a thing three ways in space extended)... though this Sermon (Logos) on Rebirth, on which I did not comment – in order that we may not be calumniators of the All unto the multitude, to whom indeed God Himself doth will we should not.

14. Tat: Tell me, O father: This Body which is made up of the Powers, is it at any time dissolved?

Hermes: Hush, [son]! Speak not of things impossible, else wilt thou sin and thy Mind's eye be quenched.

The natural body which our sense perceives is far removed from this essential birth.

The Corpus Hermeticum

The first must be dissolved, the last can never be; the first must die, the last death cannot touch.

Dost thou not know thou hast been born a God, Son of the One, even as I myself?

15. Tat: I would, O father, hear the Praise-giving with hymn which thou didst say thou heardest then when thou wert at the Eight [the Ogdoad] of Powers

Hermes: Just as the Shepherd did foretell [I should], my son, [when I came to] the Eight.

Well dost thou haste to "strike thy tent", for thou hast been made pure.

The Shepherd, Mind of all masterhood, hath not passed on to me more than hath been written down, for full well did he know that I should of myself be able to learn all, and hear what I should wish, and see all things.

He left to me the making of fair things; wherefore the Powers within me. e'en as they are in all, break into song.

16. Tat: Father, I wish to hear; I long to know these things.

Hermes: Be still, my son; hear the Praise-giving now that keeps [the soul] in tune, Hymn of Re-birth – a hymn I would not have thought fit so readily to tell, had'st thou not reached the end of all.

Wherefore this is not taught, but is kept hid in silence.

Thus then, my son, stand in a place uncovered to the sky, facing the southern wind, about the sinking of the setting sun, and make thy worship; so in like manner too when he doth rise, with face to the east wind.

Now, son, be still!

The Secret Hymnody

17. Let every nature of the World receive the utterance of my hymn!

Open thou Earth! Let every bolt of the Abyss be drawn for me. Stir not, ye Trees!

I am about to hymn creation's Lord, both All and One.

Ye Heavens open and ye Winds stay still; [and] let God's deathless Sphere receive my word (logos)!

For I will sing the praise of Him who founded all; who fixed the Earth, and hung up Heaven, and gave command that Ocean should afford sweet water [to the Earth], to both those parts that are inhabited and those that are not, for the support and use of every man; who made the Fire to shine for gods and men for every act.

Let us together all give praise to Him, sublime above the Heavens, of every nature Lord!

'Tis He who is the Eye of Mind; may He accept the praise of these my Powers!

18. Ye powers that are within me, hymn the One and All; sing with my Will, Powers all that are within me!

O blessed Gnosis, by thee illumined, hymning through thee the Light that none alone can see, I joy in Joy of Mind.

XIII. The Secret Sermon on the Mountain

Sing with me praises all ye Powers!

Sing praise, my Self-control; sing thou through me, my Righteousness, the praises of the Righteous; sing thou, my Sharing-all, the praises of the All; through me sing, Truth, Truth's praises!

Sing thou, O Good, the Good! O Life and Light, from us to you our praises flow!

Father, I give Thee thanks, to Thee Thou Energy of all my Powers; I give Thee thanks, O God, Thou Power of all my Energies!

19. Thy Reason (Logos) sings through me Thy praises. Take back through me the All into [Thy] Reason – [my] reasonable oblation!

Thus cry the Powers in me. They sing Thy praise, Thou All; they do Thy Will.

From Thee Thy Will; to Thee the All. Receive from all their reasonable oblation. The All that is in us, O Life, preserve; O Light, illumine it; O God, in-spirit it.

It is Thy Mind that plays the shepherd to Thy Word, O Thou Creator, Bestower of the Spirit [upon all].

20. [For] Thou art God, Thy Man thus cries to Thee through Fire, through Air, through Earth, through Water, [and] through Spirit, through Thy creatures.

'Tis from Thy Aeon I have found praise-giving; and in thy Will, the object of my search, have I found rest.

Tat: By thy good pleasure have I seen this praise-giving being sung, O father; I have set it in my Cosmos too.

Hermes: Say in the Cosmos that thy mind alone can see, my son.

Tat: Yea, father, in the Cosmos that the mind alone can see; for I have been made able by thy Hymn, and by thy Praise-giving my mind hath been illumined. But further I myself as well would from my natural mind send praise-giving to God.

21. Hermes: But not unheedfully, my son.

Tat: Aye. What I behold in mind, that do I say.

To thee, thou Parent of my Bringing into Birth, as unto God I, Tat, send reasonable offerings. O God and Father, thou art the Lord, thou art the Mind. Receive from me oblations reasonable as thou would'st wish; for by thy Will all things have been perfected.

Hermes: Send thou oblation, son, acceptable to God, the Sire of all; but add, my son, too, "through the Word" (Logos).

Tat: I give thee, father, thanks for showing me to sing such hymns.

22. Hermes: Happy am I, my son, that thou hast brought the good fruits forth of Truth, products that cannot die.

And now that thou hast learnt this lesson from me, make promise to keep silence on thy virtue, and to no soul, my son, make known the handing on to thee the manner of Rebirth, that we may not be thought to be

calumniators.

And now we both of us have given heed sufficiently, both I the speaker and the hearer thou.

In Mind hast thou become a Knower of thyself and our [common] Sire.

The Corpus Hermetica

Attributed to Hermes Trismestigustus

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The Corpus Hermetica

Attributed to Hermes Trismegistus

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"Enoch was the first who invented books and different sorts of writing. The ancient Greeks declare that Enoch is the same as Mercury Trismegistus [Hermes], and that he taught the sons of men the art of building cities, and enacted some admirable laws...He discovered the knowledge of the Zodiac, and the course of the Planets; and he pointed out to the sons of men, that they should worship God, that they should fast, that they should pray, that they should give alms, votive offerings, and tithes. He reprobated abominable foods and drunkenness, and appointed festivals for sacrifices to the Sun, at each of the Zodiacal Signs."

– Hebraeus

The First Book.

O my Son, write this first Book, both for Humanity's sake, and for Piety towards God.

For there can be no Religion more true or just, than to know the things that are; and to acknowledge thanks for all things, to him that made them, which thing I shall not cease continually to do.

What then should a man do, O Father, to lead his life well, seeing there is nothing here true ?

Be Pious and Religious, O my Son, for he that doth so, is the best and highest Philosopher; and without Philosophy, it is impossible ever to attain to the height and exactness of Piety or Religion.

The Corpus Hermetica

But he that shall learn and study the things that are, and how they are ordered and governed, and by whom and for what cause, or to what end, will acknowledge thanks to the Workman as to a good Father, an excellent Nurse and a faithful Steward, and he that gives thanks shall be Pious or Religious, and he that is Religious shall know both where the truth is, and what it is, and learning that, he will be yet more and more Religious.

For never, O Son, shall or can that Soul which while it is in the Body lightens and lifts up itself to know and comprehend that which is Good and True, slide back to the contrary; for it is infinitely enamoured thereof. and forgetteth all Evils; and when it hath learned and known its Father and progenitor it can no more Apostatize or depart from that Good.

And let this, O Son, be the end of Religion and Piety; whereunto when thou art once arrived, thou shalt both live well, and die blessedly, whilst thy Soul is not ignorant whether it must return and fly back again.

For this only, O Son, is the way to the Truth, which our Progenitors travelled in; and by which, making their Journey, they at length attained to the Good. It is a Venerable way, and plain, but hard and difficult for the Soul to go in that is in the Body.

For first must it war against its own self, and after much Strife and Dissention it must be overcome of one part; for the Contention is of one against two, whilst it flies away and they strive to hold and detain it.

But the victory of both is not like; for the one hasteth to that which is Good, but the other is a neighbour to the things that are Evil; and that which is Good, desireth to be set at Liberty; but the things that are Evil, love Bondage and Slavery.

And if the two parts be overcome, they become quiet, and are content to accept of it as their Ruler; but if the one be overcome of the two, it is by them led and carried to be punished by its being and continuance here.

This is, O Son, the Guide in the way that leads thither for thou must first forsake the Body before thy end, and get the victory in this Contention and Strifeful life, and when thou hast overcome. return.

But now, O my Son, I will by Heads run through the things that are: understand thou what I say, and remember what thou hearest.

All things that are, are moved; only that which is not, is unmovable.

Every Body is changeable.

Not every Body is dissolvable.

Some Bodies are dissolvable.

Every living thing is not mortal.

Not every living thing is immortal.

That which may be dissolved is also corruptible.

That which abides always is unchangeable.

That which is unchangeable is eternal.

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That which is always made is always corrupted.

That which is made but once, is never corrupted, neither becomes any other thing.

First, God; Secondly, the World; Thirdly, Man.

The World for Man, Man for God.

Of the Soul, that part which is Sensible is mortal, but that which is Reasonable is immortal.

Every essence is immortal.

Every essence is unchangeable.

Every thing that is, is double.

None of the things that are stand still.

Not all things are moved by a Soul, but every thing that is, is moved by a Soul.

Every thing that suffers is Sensible, every thing that is Sensible suffereth.

Every thing that is sad rejoiceth also, and is a mortal living Creature.

Not every thing that joyeth is also sad, but is an eternal living thing.

Not every Body is sick; every Body that is sick is dissolvable.

The Mind in God.

Reasoning (or disputing or discoursing) in Man,

Reason in the Mind.

The Mind is void of suffering.

No thing in a Body true.

All that is incorporeal, is void of Lying.

Every thing that is made is corruptible.

Nothing good upon Earth, nothing evil in Heaven.

God is good, Man is evil.

Good is voluntary, or of its own accord.

Evil is involuntary or against its will.

The Gods choose good things, as good things.

The Corpus Hermetica

Time is a Divine thing.

Law is Humane.

Malice is the nourishment of the World.

Time is the Corruption of Man.

Whatsoever is in Heaven is unalterable.

All upon Earth is alterable.

Nothing in Heaven is servanted, nothing upon Earth free.

Nothing unknown in Heaven, nothing known upon Earth.

The things upon Earth communicate not with those in Heaven.

All things in Heaven are unblameable, all things upon Earth are subject to Reprehension.

That which is immortal, is not mortal: that which is mortal is not immortal.

That which is sown, is not always begotten; but that which is begotten always, is sown.

Of a dissolvable Body, there are two Times, one from sowing to generation, one from generation to death.

Of an everlasting Body, the time is only from the Generation.

Dissolvable Bodies are increased and diminished,

Dissolvable matter is altered into contraries; to wit, Corruption and Generation, but Eternal matter into its self, and its like.

The Generation of Man is Corruption, the Corruption of Man is the beginning of Generation.

That which off-springs or begetteth another, is itself an offspring or begotten by another.

Of things that are, some are in Bodies, some in their Ideas.

Whatsoever things belong to operation or working, are in a Body.

That which is immortal, partakes not of that which is mortal.

That which is mortal, cometh not into a Body immortal, but that which is immortal, cometh into that which is mortal.

Operations or Workings are not carried upwards, but descend downwards.

Things upon Earth do nothing advantage those in Heaven, but all things in Heaven do profit and advantage the things upon Earth.

The Corpus Hermetica

Heaven is capable and a fit receptacle of everlasting Bodies, the Earth of corruptible Bodies.

The Earth is brutish, the Heaven is reasonable or rational.

Those things that are in Heaven are subjected or placed under it, but the things on Earth, are placed upon it.

Heaven is the first Element.

Providence is Divine Order.

Necessity is the Minister or Servant of Providence.

Fortune is the carriage or effect of that which is without Order; the Idol of operation, a lying fantasy or opinion.

What is God? The immutable or unalterable Good.

What is Man? An unchangeable Evil.

If thou perfectly remember these Heads, thou canst not forget those things which in more words I have largely expounded unto thee; for these are the Contents or Abridgment of them.

Avoid all Conversation with the multitude or common People, for I would not have thee subject to Envy, much less to be ridiculous unto the many.

For the like always takes to itself that which is like, but the unlike never agrees with the unlike: such Discourses as these have very few Auditors, and peradventure very few will have, but they have something peculiar unto themselves.

They do rather sharpen and whet evil men to their maliciousness, therefore it behoveth to avoid the multitude and take heed of them as not understanding the virtue and power of the things that are said.

How dost Thou mean, O Father?

Thus, O Son, the whole Nature and Composition of those living things called Men, is very prone to Maliciousness, and is very familiar, and as it were nourished with it, and therefore is delighted with it. Now this wight if it shall come to learn or know, that the world was once made, and all things are done according to Providence and Necessity, Destiny, or Fate, bearing Rule over all: Will he not be much worse than himself, despising the whole because it was made. And if he may lay the cause of evil upon Fate or Destiny, he will never abstain from any evil work.

Wherefore we must look warily to such kind of people, that being in ignorance, they may be less evil for fear of that which is hidden and kept secret.

The Second Book. Called "Poemander."

1. My Thoughts being once seriously busied about the things that are, and my Understanding lifted up, all my bodily Senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep, by reason either of fulness of meat, or of bodily labour. Me thought I saw one of an exceeding great stature, and an infinite greatness call me by my name, and say unto me, "What wouldest thou Hear and See? or what wouldest thou Understand, to Learn, and Know!"

2. Then said I, " Who art Thou?"

"I am," quoth he, "Poemander, the mind of the Great Lord, the most Mighty and absolute Emperor: I know what thou wouldest have, and I am always present with thee."

3. Then said I, "I would Learn the Things that art, and Understand the Nature of them and know God."

"How?" said he.

I answered, "That I would gladly hear."

Then he, "Have me again in thy mind, and whatsoever thou wouldst learn, I will teach thee."

4. When he had thus said, he was changed in his Idea or Form and straightway in the twinkling of an eye, all things were opened unto me: and I saw an infinite Sight, all things were become light, both sweet and exceedingly pleasant; and I was wonderfully delighted in the beholding it.

5. But after a little while, there was a darkness made in part, coming down obliquely, fearful and hideous, which seemed unto me to be changed into a Certain Moist Nature, unspeakably troubled, which yielded a smoke as from fire; and from whence proceeded a voice unutterable, and very mournful, but inarticulate, insomuch that it seemed to have come from the Light.

6. Then from that Light, a certain Holy Word joined itself unto Nature, and out flew the pure and unmixed Fire from the moist Nature upward on high; it is exceeding Light, and Sharp, and Operative withal. And the Air which was also light, followed the Spirit and mounted up to Fire (from the Earth and the Water) insomuch that it seemed to hang and depend upon it.

7. And the Earth and the Water stayed by themselves so mingled together, that the Earth could not be seen for the Water, but they were moved, because of the Spiritual Word that was carried upon them.

8. Then said Poemander unto me, "Dost thou understand this Vision, and what it meaneth?"

"I shall know," said I.

Then said he, "I am that Light, the Mind, thy God, who am before that Moist Nature that appeareth out of Darkness, and that Bright and Lightful Word from the Mind is the Son of God."

9. "How is that?" quoth I.

"Thus," replied he, "Understand it, That which in thee Seeth and Heareth, the Word of the Lord, and the Mind, the Father, God, Differeth not One from the Other, and the Unison of these is Life."

Trismegistus. "I thank thee."

Pimander. "But first conceive well the Light in thy mind and know it."

10. When he had thus said, for a long time me looked steadfastly one upon the other, insomuch that I trembled at his Idea or Form.

11. But when he nodded to me, I beheld in my mind the Light that is in innumerable, and the truly indefinite Ornament or World; and that the Fire is comprehended or contained in or by a most great Power, and constrained to keep its station.

12. These things I understood, seeing the word of Pimander; and when I was mightily amazed, he said again unto me, "Hast thou seen in thy mind that Archetypal Form, which was before the Interminated and Infinite Beginning?" Thus Pimander to me.

"But whence," quoth I, "or whereof are the Elements of Nature made?"

Pimander : "Of the Will and Counsel of God; which taking the Word, and beholding the beautiful World (in the Archetype thereof) imitated it, and so made this World, by the principles and vital Seeds or Soul-like productions of itself."

13. For the Mind being God, Male and Female, Life and Light, brought forth by his Word; another Mind, the Workman: Which being God of the Fire, and the Spirit, fashioned and formed seven other Governors, which in their Circles contain the Sensible World, whose Government or Disposition is called Fate or Destiny.
14. Straightway leaped out, or exalted itself from the downward born Elements of God, the Word of God into the clean and pure Workmanship of Nature, and was united to the Workman, Mind, for it was Consubstantial; and so the downward born Elements of Nature were left without Reason, that they might be the only Matter.
15. But the Workman, Mind, together with the Word, containing the Circles and Whirling them about, turned round as a Wheel his own Workmanships, and suffered them to be turned from an indefinite Beginning to an undeterminable End; for they always begin where they end.
16. And the Circulation or running round of these, as the Mind willeth, out of the lower or downward-born Elements brought forth unreasonable or brutish creatures, for they had no reason, the Air flying things, and the Water such as swim.
17. And the Earth and the Water was separated, either from the other, as the Mind would: and the Earth brought forth from herself such Living Creatures as she had, four-footed and creeping Beasts, wild and tame.
18. But the Father of all things, the Mind being Life and Light, brought forth Man, like unto himself, whom he loved as his proper Birth, for he was all beautiful, having the Image of his Father.
19. For indeed God was exceedingly enamoured of his own Form or Shape, and delivered unto it all his own Workmanships. But he seeing and understanding the Creation of the Workman in the whole, would needs also himself Fall to Work, and so was separated from the Father, being in the sphere of Generation or operation.
20. Having all Power, he considered the Operations or Workmanships of the Seven; but they loved him, and every one made him partaker of his own Order.
21. And he learning diligently and understanding their Essence, and partaking their nature, resolved to pierce and break through the Circumference of the Circles, and to understand the Power of him that sits upon the Fire.
22. And having already all power of mortal things, of the Living, and of the unreasonable Creatures of the World, stooped down and peeped through the Harmony, and breaking through the strength of the Circles, so shewed and made manifest the downward-born Nature, the fair and beautiful Shape or Form of God.
23. Which when he saw, having in itself the unsatiable Beauty and all the Operation of the Seven Governors, and the Form or Shape of God, he Smiled for love, as if he had seen the Shape or Likeness in the Water, or the shadow upon the Earth of the fairest Human form.
24. And seeing in the Water a shape, a shape like unto himself in himself he loved it, and would cohabit with it; and immediately upon the resolution, ensued the Operation, and brought forth the unreasonable Image or Shape.
25. Nature presently laying hold of what it so much loved, did wholly wrap herself about it, and they were mingled, for they loved one another.
26. And for this cause, Man above all things that live upon Earth, is double; Mortal because of his Body, and Immortal because of the substantial Man: For being immortal, and having power of all things, he yet suffers

mortal things, and such as are subject to Fate or Destiny.

27. And therefore being; above all Harmony, he is made and become a servant to Harmony. And being Hermaphrodite, or Male and Female, and watchful, he is governed by and subjected to a Father, that is both Male and Female and watchful.

28. After these things, I said: "Thou art my Mind and I am in love with Reason."

29. Then said Pimander, "This is the Mystery that to this day is hidden, and kept secret; for Nature being mingled with Man brought forth a Wonder most wonderful; for he having the Nature of the Harmony of the Seven, from him whom I told thee, the Fire and the Spirit, Nature continued not, but forth with brought forth seven Men all Males and Females and sublime, or on high, according to the Natures of the Seven Governors."

30. "And after these things, O Pimander," quoth I, "I am now come into a great desire, and longing to hear, do not digress, or run out."

31. But he said, "Keep silence, for I have not yet finished the first speech."

32. Trismegistus. "Behold, I am silent."

33. Pimander. "The Generation therefore of these Seven was after this manner, the Air being Feminine and the Water desirous of Copulation, took from the Fire its ripeness, and from the aether Spirit; and so Nature produced bodies after the Species and Shape of men."

34. And Man was made of Life and Light into Soul and Mind, of Life the Soul, of Light the Mind.

35. And so all the Members of the Sensible World, continued unto the period of the end, bearing rule, and generating.

36. Hear now the rest of that speech, thou so much desirest to hear.

37. When that Period was fulfilled, the bond of all things was loosed and untied by the Will of God; for all living Creatures being Hermaphroditical, or Male and Female, were loosed and untied together with Man; and so the Males were apart by themselves and the Females likewise.

38. And straightway God said to the Holy Word,. Increase in Increasing, and Multiply in Multitude all you my Creatures and Workmanships. And let Him that is endued with Mind, know Himself to be Immortal; and that the cause of Death is the Love of the Body, and let Him Learn all Things that are.

39. When he had thus said, Providence by Fate and Harmony, made the mixtures, and established the Generations, and all things were multiplied according to their kind, and he that knew himself, came at length to the Superstantial of every way substantial good.

40. But he that through the Error of Love, loved the Body, abideth wandering in darkness, sensible, suffering the things of death.

41. Trismegistus. "But why do they that are ignorant sin so much, that they should therefore be deprived of immortality."

42. Pimander. "Thou seemest not to have understood what thou hast heard."

43. Trismegistus. "Peradventure I seem so to thee, but I both understand and remember them."
44. Pimander. "I am glad for thy sake, if thou understoodest them."
45. Trismegistus. "Tell me, why are they worthy of death, that are in death?"
46. Pimander. "Because there goeth a sad and dismal darkness before its Body; of which darkness is the moist Nature, of which moist Nature, the Body consisteth in the sensible World, from whence death is derived. Hast thou understood this aright!"
47. Trismegistus. "But why or how doth he that understands himself, go or pass into God!"
48. Pimander. "That which the Word of God said, say I: Because the Father of all things consists of Life and Light, whereof Man is made."
49. Trismegistus. "Thou sayest very well."
50. Pimander. "God and the Father is Light and Life, of which Man is made. If therefore thou learn and believe thyself to be of the Life and Light, thou shalt again pass into Life."
51. Trismegistus. "But yet tell me more, O my Mind, how I shall go into Life."
52. Pimander. "God saith, Let the Man endued with a Mind, mark, consider, and know himself well."
53. Trismegistus. "Have not all Men a mind?"
54. Pimander. "Take heed what thou sayest, for I the Mind come unto men that are holy and good, pure and merciful, and that live piously and religiously; and my presence is a help unto them. And forthwith they know all things, and lovingly they supplicate and propitiate the Father; and blessing him, they give him thanks, and sing hymns unto him, being ordered and directed by filial Affection, and natural Love: And before they give up their Bodies to the death of them, they hate their Senses, knowing their Works and Operations.
55. "Rather I that am the Mind itself, will not suffer the Operations or Works, which happen or belong to the body, to be finished and brought to perfection in them; but being the Porter and Door-keeper, I will shut up the entrances of Evil, and cut off the thoughtful desires of filthy works.
56. "But to the foolish, and evil, and wicked, and envious and covetous, and murderous, and profane, I am far off giving place to the avenging Demon, which applying unto him the sharpness of fire, tormenteth such a man sensibly, and armeth him the more to all wickedness, that he may obtain the greater punishment.
57. "And such a one never ceaseth, having unfulfillable desires and unsatiable concupiscences, and always fighting in darkness for the Demon afflicts and tormenteth him continually, and increaseth the fire upon him more and more."
58. Trismegistus. "Thou hast, O Mind, most excellently taught me all things, as I desired; but tell me moreover, after the return is made, what then?"
59. Pimander. "First of all, in the resolution of the material Body, the Body itself is given up to alteration, and the form which it had, becometh invisible; and the idle manners are permitted, and left to the Demon, and the Senses of the Body return into their Fountains, being parts, and again made up into Operations.

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60. "And Anger and Concupiscence go into the brutish or unreasonable Nature; and the rest striveth upward by Harmony.
61. "And to the first Zone it giveth the power it had of increasing and diminishing.
62. "To the second, the machination or plotting of evils, and one effectual deceit or craft.
63. "To the third, the idle deceit of Concupiscence.
64. "To the fourth, the desire of Rule, and unsatiable Ambition.
65. "To the fifth, profane Boldness, and headlong rashness of Confidence.
66. "To the sixth, Evil and ineffectual occasions of Riches.
67. "And to the seventh Zone, subtle Falsehood always lying in wait.
68. "And then being made naked of all the Operations of Harmony it cometh to the eighth Nature, having its proper power, and singeth praises to the Father with the things that are, and all they that are present rejoice, and congratulate the coming of it; and being made like to them with whom it converseth, it heareth also the Powers that are above the eighth Nature, singing praise to God in a certain voice that is peculiar to them.
69. "And then in order they return unto the Father, and themselves deliver themselves to the powers, and becoming powers they are in God.
70. "This is the Good, and to them that know to be deified.
71. "Furthermore, why sayest thou, What resteth, but that understanding all men, thou become a guide, and way-leader to them that are worthy; that the kind of Humanity or Mankind, may be saved by God!"
72. When Pimander had thus said unto me, he was mingled among the Powers.
73. But I giving thanks, and blessing the Father of all things, rose up, being enabled by him, and taught the Nature, of the Nature of the whole and having seen the greatest sight or spectacle.
74. And I began to Preach unto men, the beauty and fairness of Piety and Knowledge.
75. O ye People, Men, born and made of the Earth, which have given Yourselves over to Drunkenness, and Sleep, and to the Ignorance of God, be Sober, and Cease your Surfeit, whereto you are allured, and invited by Brutish and Unreasonable Sleep.
76. And they that heard me, come willingly, and with one accord, and then I said further.
77. Why, O Men of the Off-spring of the Earth, why have you delivered Yourselves over unto Death, having Power to Partake of Immortality; Repent and Change your Minds, you that have together Walked in Error, and have been Darkened in Ignorance.
78. Depart from that dark Light, be Partakers of Immortality, and Leave or Forsake Corruption.
79. And some of Them That Heard Me, mocking and scorning, went away and delivered themselves up to the way of death.

80. But others, casting themselves down before my feet, besought me that they might be taught; but I causing them to rise up, became a guide of mankind, teaching them the reasons how, and by what means they may be saved. And I sowed in them the words of Wisdom, and nourished them with Ambrosian Water of Immortality.

81. And when it was Evening, and the Brightness of the same began wholly to go down, I commanded them to give thanks to God; and when they had finished their thanksgiving, everyone returned to his

own lodging.

82. But I wrote in myself the bounty and beneficence of Pimander; and being filled with what I most desired, I was exceeding glad.

83. For the sleep of the Body was the sober watchfulness of the mind; and the shutting of my eyes the true Sight, and my silence great with child and full of good; and the pronouncing of my words, the blossoms and fruits of good things.

84. And thus came to pass or happened unto me, which I received from my mind, that is, Pimander, the Lord of the Word; whereby I became inspired by God with the Truth.

85. For which cause, with my Soul, and whole strength, I give praise and blessing unto God the Father.

86. Holy is God the Father of All Things.

87. Holy is God Whose Will is Performed and Accomplished by His Own Powers.

88. Holy is God, that Determineth to be Known, and is Known of His Own, or Those that are His.

89. Holy art Thou, that by Thy Word hast established all Things.

90. Holy art Thou of Whom all Nature is the Image.

91. Holy art Thou Whom Nature hath not Formed.

92. Holy art Thou that art Stronger than all Power.

93. Holy art Thou, that art Greater than all Excellency.

94. Holy art Thou, Who art Better than all Praise.

95. Accept these Reasonable Sacrifices from a Pure Soul, and a Heart stretched out unto Thee.

96. O Thou Unspeakable, Unutterable, to be Praised with Silence!

97. I beseech Thee, that I may never Err from the Knowledge of Thee, Look Mercifully upon Me, and Enable Me, and Enlighten with this Grace, those that are in Ignorance, the Brothers of my Kind, but Thy Sons.

98. Therefore I Believe Thee, and Bear Witness, and go into the Life and Light.

98. Blessed art Thou, O Father, Thy Man would be Sanctified with Thee, as Thou hast given Him all Power.

The Third Book. Called "The Holy Sermon."

- 1. *The glory of all things, God and that which is Divine, and the Divine Nature, the beginning of things that are.***
2. God, and the Mind, and Nature, and Matter, and Operation, or Working and Necessity, and the End and Renovation.
3. For there were in the Chaos, an infinite darkness in the Abyss or bottomless Depth, and Water, and a subtle Spirit intelligible in Power; and there went out the Holy Light, and the Elements were coagulated from the Sand out of the moist Substance.
4. And all the Gods distinguished the Nature full of Seeds.
5. And when all things were interminated and unmade up, the light things were divided on high. And the heavy things were founded upon the moist sand, all things being Terminated or Divided by Fire; and being sustained or hung up by the Spirit they were so carried, and the Heaven was seen in Seven Circles.
6. And the Gods were seen in their Ideas of the Stars, with all their Signs, and the Stars were numbered, with the Gods in them. And the Sphere was all lined with Air, carried about in a circular, motion by the Spirit of God.
7. And every God by his internal power, did that which was commanded him; and there were made four footed things, and creeping things, and such as live in the Water, and such as fly, and every fruitful Seed, and Grass, and the Flowers of all Greens, and which had sowed in themselves the Seeds of Regeneration.
8. As also the Generations of men to the knowledge of the Divine Works, and a lively or working Testimony of Nature, and a multitude of men, and the Dominion of all things under Heaven and the knowledge of good things, and to be increased in increasing, and multiplied in multitude.
9. And every Soul in flesh, by the wonderful working of the Gods in the Circles, to the beholding of Heaven, the Gods, Divine Works, and the Operations of Nature; and for Signs of good things, and the knowledge of the Divine Power, and to find out every cunning workmanship of good things.
10. So it beginneth to live in them, and to be wise according to the Operation of the course of the circular Gods; and to be resolved into that which shall be great Monuments; and Remembrances of the cunning Works done upon Earth, leaving them to be read by the darkness of times.
11. And every generation of living flesh, of Fruit, Seed, and all Handicrafts, though they be lost, must of necessity be renewed by the renovation of the Gods, and of the Nature of a Circle, moving in number; for it is a Divine thing, that every world temperature should be renewed by nature, for in that which is Divine, is Nature also established.

The Fourth Book. Called "The Key."

- 1. *Yesterday's Speech, O Asclepius, I dedicated to thee, this day's it is fit to dedicate to Tat, because it is an Epitome of those general speeches that were spoken to him.***
2. God therefore, and the Father, and the Good, O Tat, have the same Nature, or rather also the same Act and Operation.

3. For there is one name or appellation of Nature and Increase which concerneth things changeable, and another about things unchangeable, and about things unmoveable, that is to say, Things Divine and Human; every one of which, himself will have so to be; but action or operation is of another thing, or elsewhere, as we have taught in other things, Divine and Human, which must here also be understood.
4. For his Operation or Act, is his Will, and his Essence, to Will all Things to be.
5. For what is God, and the Father, and the Good, but the Being of all things that yet are not, and the existence itself, of those things that are!
6. This is God, this is the Father, this is the Good, whereunto no other thing is present or approacheth.
7. For the World, and the Sun, which is also a Father by Participation, is not for all that equally the cause of Good, and of Life, to living Creatures: And if this be so, he is altogether constrained by the Will of the Good, without which it is not possible, either to be, or to be begotten or made.
8. But the Father is the cause of his Children, who hath a will both to sow and nourish that which is good by the Son.
9. For Good is always active or busy in making; and this cannot he in any other, but in him that taketh nothing, and yet willet all things to be; for I will not say, O Tat, making them; for he that maketh is defective in much time, in which sometimes he maketh not, as also of quantity and quality; for sometimes he maketh those things that have quantity and quality and sometimes the contrary.
10. But God is the Father, and the Good, in being all things; for he both will be this, and is it, and yet all this for himself(as is true) in him that can see it.
11. For all things else are for this, it is the property of Good to be known: This is the Good, O Tat.
12. Tat. Thou hast filled us, O Father, with a sight both good and fair, and the eye of my mind is almost become more holy by the sight or spectacle.
13. Trismegistus. I Wonder not at It, for the Sight of Good is not like the Beam of the Sun, which being of a fiery shining brightness, maketh the eye blind by his excessive Light, that gazeth upon it; rather the contrary, for it enlighteneth, and so much increaseth the light of the eye, as any man is able to receive the influence of this Intelligible clearness.
14. For it is more swift and sharp to pierce, and innocent or harmless withal, and full of immortality, and they that are capable and can draw any store of this spectacle, and sight do many times fall asleep from the Body, into this most fair and beauteous Vision ; which thing Celius and Saturn our Progenitors obtained unto.
15. Tat. I would we also, O Father, could do so.
16. Trismegistus. I would have could, O Son; but for the present we are less intent to the Vision, and cannot yet open the eyes of our minds to behold the incorruptible, and incomprehensible Beauty of that Good: But then shall we see it, when we have nothing at all to say of it.
17. For the knowledge of it, is a Divine Silence, and the rest of all the Senses; For neither can he that understands that understand anything else, nor he that sees that, see any thing else, nor hear any other thing, nor in sum, move the Body.

18. For shining steadfastly upon, and round about the whole Mind it enlighteneth all the Soul ; and loosing it from the Bodily Senses and Motions, it draweth it from the Body, and changeth it wholly into the Essence of God.

19. For it is Possible for the Soul, O Son, to be Deified while yet it Lodgeth in the Body of Man, if it Contemplate the Beauty of the Good.

20. Tat. How dost thou mean deifying, Father!

21. Trismegistus. There are differences, O Son, of every Soul.

22. Tat. But how dost thou again divide the changes?

23. Trismegistus. Hast thou not heard in the general Speeches, that from one Soul of the Universe, are all those Souls, which in all the world are tossed up and down, as it were, and severally divided? Of these Souls there are many changes, some into a more fortunate estate, and some quite contrary; for they which are of creeping things, are changed into those of watery things and those of things living in the water, to those of things living upon the Land; and Airy ones are changed into men, and human Souls, that lay hold of immortality, are changed into Demons.

24. And so they go on into the Sphere or Region of the fixed Gods, for there are two choirs or companies of Gods, one of them that wander, and another of them that are fixed. And this is the most perfect glory of the Soul.

25. But the Soul entering into the Body of a Man, if it continue evil, shall neither taste of immortality, nor is partaker of the good.

26. But being drawn back the same way, it returneth into creeping things. And this is the condemnation of an evil Soul.

27. And the wickedness of a Soul is ignorance; for the Soul that knows nothing of the things that are, neither the Nature of them, nor that which is good, but is blinded, rusheth and dasheth against the bodily Passions, and unhappy as it is, not knowing itself, it serveth strange Bodies, and evil ones, carrying the Body as a burthen, and not ruling, but ruled. And this is the mischief of the Soul.

28. On the contrary, the virtue of the Soul is Knowledge; for he that knows is both good and religious, and already Divine.

29. Tat. But who is such a one, O Father!

30. Trismegistus. He that neither speaks, nor hears many things; for he, O Son, that heareth two speeches or hearings, fighteth in the shadow.

31. For God, and the Father, and Good, is neither spoken nor heard.

32. This being so in all things that are, are the Senses, because they cannot be without them.

33. But Knowledge differs much from Sense; for Sense is of things that surmount it, but Knowledge is the end of Sense.

34. Knowledge is the gift of God ; for all Knowledge is unbodily but useth the Mind as an Instrument, as the Mind useth the Body.
35. Therefore both intelligible and material things go both of them into bodies; for, of contraposition, That is Setting One against Another, and Contrariety, all Things must Consist. And it is impossible it should be otherwise,
36. Tat. who therefore is this material God?
37. Trismegistus. The fair and beautiful world, and yet it is not good; for it is material and easily passible, nay, it is the first of all passible things; and the second of the things that are, and needy or wanting somewhat else. And it was once made and is always, and is ever in generation, and made, and continually makes, or generates things that have quantity and quality.
38. For it is moveable, and every material motion is generation; but the intellectual stability moves the material motion after this manner.
39. Because the World Is a Sphere, that is a Head, and above the head there is nothing material, as beneath the feet there is nothing intellectual.
40. The whole universe is material; The Mind is the head, and it is moved spherically, that is like a head.
41. Whatsoever therefore is joined or united to the Membrane or Film of this head, wherein the Soul is, is immortal, and as in the Soul of a made Body, hath its Soul full of the Body; but those that are further from that Membrane, have the Body full of Soul.
42. The whole is a living wight, and therefore consisteth of material and intellectual.
43. And the World is the first, and Man the second living wight after the World; but the first of things that are mortal and therefore hath whatsoever benefit of the Soul all the others have: And yet for all this, he is not only not good, but flatly evil, as being mortal.
44. For the World is not good as it is moveable; nor evil as it is immortal.
45. But man is evil, both as he is moveable, and as he is mortal.
46. But the Soul of Man is carried in this manner, The Mind is in Reason, Reason in the Soul, the Soul in the Spirit, the Spirit in the Body.
47. The Spirit being diffused and going through the veins, and arteries, and blood, both moveth the living Creature, and after a certain manner beareth it.
48. Wherefore some also have thought the Soul to be blood, being deceived in Nature, not knowing that first the Spirit must return into the Soul, and then the blood is congealed, the veins and arteries emptied, and then the living thing dieth: And this is the death of the Body.
49. All things depend of one beginning, and– the beginning depends of that which is one and alone.
50. And the beginning is moved, that it may again be a beginning; but that which is one, standeth and abideth, and is not moved,

51. There are therefore these three, God the Father, and the Good, the World and Man: God hath the World, and the World hath Man; and the World is the Son of God, and Man as it were the Offspring of the World.

52. For God is not ignorant of R/Ian, but knows him perfectly, and will be known by him. This only is healthful to man; the Knowledge of God: this is the return of Olympus; by this only the Soul is made good, and not sometimes good, and sometimes evil, but of necessity Good.

53. Tat. What meanest thou, O Father.

54. Trismegistus. Consider, O Son, the Soul of a Child, when as yet it hath received no dissolution of its Body, which is not yet grown, but is very small; how then if it look upon itself, it sees itself beautiful, as not having been yet spotted with the Passions of the Body, but as it were depending yet upon the Soul of the World.

55. But when the Body is grown and distracteth, the Soul it engenders Forgetfulness, and partakes no more of the Fair and the Good, and Forgetfulness is Evilness.

56. The like also happeneth to them that go out of the Body: for when the Soul runs back into itself the Spirit is contracted into the blood and the Soul into the Spirit; but the Mind being made pure, and free from these clothings; and being Divine by Nature, taking a fiery Body rangeth abroad in every place, leaving the Soul to judgment, and to the punishment it hath deserved.

57. Tat. Why dost thou say so, O Father, that the Mind is separated from the Soul, and the Soul from the Spirit? When even now thou saidst the Soul was the Clothing or Apparel of the Mind, and the Body of the Soul.

58. Trismegistus. O Son, he that hears must co-understand and conspire in thought with him that speaks; yea, he must have his hearing swifter and sharper than the voice of the speaker.

59. The disposition of these Clothings or Covers, is done in an Earthly Body; for it is impossible, that the mind should establish or rest itself, naked, and of itself; in an Earthly Body; neither is the Earthly Body able to bear such immortality; and therefore that it might suffer so great virtue the Mind compacted as it were, and took to itself the passible Body of the Soul, as a Covering or Clothing. And the Soul being also in some sort Divine, useth the Spirit as her Minister and Servant, and the Spirit governeth the living thing.

60. When therefore the Mind is separated, and departeth from the earthly Body, presently it puts on its Fiery Coat, which it could not do having to dwell in an Earthly Body.

61. For the Earth cannot suffer fire, for it is all burned of a small spark; therefore is the water poured round about the Earth, as a Wall or defence, to withstand the flame of fire.

62. But the Mind being the most sharp or swift of all the Divine Cogitations, and more swift than all the Elements, hath the fire for its Body.

63. For the Mind which is the Workman of all useth the fire as his instrument in his Workmanship; and he that is the Workman of all, useth it to the making of all things, as it is used by man, to the making of Earthly things only; for the Mind that is upon Earth, void, or naked of fire, cannot do the business of men. nor that which is otherwise the affairs of God.

64. But the Soul of Man, and yet not everyone, but that which is pious and religious, is Angelical and Divine. And such a Soul, after it is departed from the Body, having striven the strife of Piety, becomes either Mind or

God.

65. And the strife of Piety is to know God, and to injure no Man, and this way it becomes Mind.

66. But an impious Soul abideth in its own essence, punished of itself, and seeking an earthly and human Body to enter into.

67. For no other Body is capable of a Human Soul, neither is it lawful for a Man's Soul to fall into the Body of an unreasonable living thing: for it is the Law or Decree of God, to preserve a Human Soul from so great a contumely and reproach.

68. Tat. How then is the Soul of Man punished, O Father; and what is its greatest torment.

69. Hermes. Impiety, O my Son; for what Fire hath so great a flame as it? Or what biting Beast doth so tear the Body as it doth the Soul.

70. Or dost thou not see how many evils the wicked Soul suffereth, roaring and crying out, I am Burned, I am Consumed, I know not what to Say, or Do, I am Devoured, Unhappy Wretch, of the Evils that compass and lay-hold upon me; Miserable that I am, I neither See nor Hear anything.

71. These are the voices of a punished and tormented Soul, and not as many; and thou, O Son, thinkest that the Soul going out of the Body grows brutish or enters into a Beast: which is a very great Error, for the Soul punished after this manner.

72. For the Mind, when it is ordered or appointed to get a fiery Body for the services of God, coming down into the wicked Soul, torments it with the whips of Sins, wherewith the wicked Soul being scourged, turns itself to Murders, and Contumelies, and Blasphemies, and divers Violences, and other things by which men are injured

73. But into a pious Soul, the Mind entering, leads it into the Light of Knowledge.

74. And such a Soul is never satisfied with singing praise to God, and speaking well of all men; and both in words and deeds, always doing good in imitation of her Father.

75. Therefore, O Son, we must give thanks, and pray, that we may obtain a good mind.

76. The Soul therefore may be altered or changed into the better, but into the worse it is impossible.

77. But there is a communion of Souls, and those of Gods, communicate with those of men; and those of men, with those of Beasts.

78. And the better always take of the worse, Gods of Men, Men of brute Beasts, but God of all: For he is the best of all, and all things are less than he.

79. Therefore is the World subject unto God, Man unto the World and unreasonable things to Man.

80. But God is above all, and about all; and the beams of God are operations; and the beams of the World are Natures; and the beams of Man are Arts and Sciences.

81. And Operations do act by the World, and upon man by the natural beams of the World, but Natures work by the Elements, and man by Arts and Sciences.

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82. And this is the Government of the whole, depending upon the Nature of the One, and piercing or coming down by the One Mind, than which nothing is more Divine, and more efficacious or operative; and nothing more uniting, or nothing is more One. The Communion of Gods to Men, and of Men to God.

83. This is the Bonus Genius, or good Demon, blessed Soul that is fullest of it! and unhappy Soul that is empty of it!

84. Tat. And wherefore Father?

85. Trismegistus. Know Son, that every Soul hath the Good Mind; for of that it is we now speak, and not of that Minister of which we said before, That he was sent from the Judgment.

86. For the Soul without the Mind, can neither do, nor say any thing; for many times the Mind flies away from the Soul, and in that hour the Soul neither seeth nor heareth, but is like an unreasonable thing; so great is the power of the Mind.

87. But neither brooketh it an idle or lazy Soul, but leaves such a one fastened to the Body, and by it pressed down.

88. And such a Soul, O Son, hath no mind, wherefore neither must such a one be called a Man.

89. For man is a Divine living thing and is not to be compared to any brute Beast that lives upon Earth, but to them that are above in Heaven, that are called Gods.

90. Rather, if we shall be bold to speak the truth, he that is a man indeed, is above them, or at least they are equal in power, one to the other, For none of the things in Heaven will come down upon Earth, and leave the limits of Heaven, but a man ascends up into Heaven, and measures it.

91. And he knoweth what things are on high, and what below, and learneth all other things exactly.

92. And that which is the greatest of all, he leaveth not the Earth, and yet is above: So great is the greatness of his Nature.

93. Wherefore we must be bold to say, That an Earthly Man is a Mortal God, and That the Heavenly God is an Immortal Man.

94. Wherefore, by these two are all things governed, the World and Man; but they and all things else, of that which is One.

The Fifth Book.

"That God is not Manifest and yet most Manifest."

1. This Discourse I will also make to thee, O Tat, that thou mayest not be ignorant of the more excellent Name of God.

2. But do thou contemplate in thy Mind, how that which to many seems hidden and unmanifest, may be most manifest unto thee.

3. For it were not all, if it were apparent, for whatsoever is apparent, is generated or made; for it was made manifest, but that which is not manifest is ever.
4. For it needeth not to be manifested, for it is always.
5. And he maketh all other things manifest, being unmanifest as being always, and making other things manifest, he is not made manifest.
9. Himself is not made, yet in fantasy he fantasieth all things, or in appearance he maketh them appear, for appearance is only of those things that are generated or made, for appearance is nothing but generation.
7. But he is that One, that is not made nor generated, is also unapparent and unmanifest.
8. But making all things appear, he appeareth in all and by all; but especially he is manifested to or in those things wherein himself listeth.
9. Thou therefore, O Tat, my Son, pray first to the Lord and Father, and to the Alone and to the One from whom is one to be merciful to thee, that thou mayest knowest and understand so great a God; and that he would shine one of his beams upon thee In thy understanding.
10. For only the Understanding sees that which is not manifest or apparent, as being itself not manifest or apparent; and if thou canst, O Tat, it will appear to the eyes of thy Mind.
11. For the Lord, void of envy, appeareth through the whole world. Thou mayest see the intelligence, and take it in thy hands, and contemplate the Image of God.
12. But if that which is in thee, be not known or apparent unto thee, how shall he in thee be seen, and appear unto thee by the eyes?
13. But if thou wilt see him, consider and understand the Sun, consider the course of the Moon, consider the order of the Stars.
14. Who is he that keepeth order? for all order is circumscribed or terminated in number and place.
15. The Sun is the greatest of the Gods in heaven, to whom all the heavenly Gods give place, as to a King and potentate; and yet he being such a one, greater than the Earth or the Sea, is content to suffer infinite lesser stars to walk and move above himself; whom doth he fear the while, O Son?
16. Every one of these Stars that are in Heaven, do not make the like, or an equal course; who is it that hath prescribed unto every one, the manner and the greatness of their course!
17. This Bear that turns round about its own self; and carries round the whole World with her, who possessed and made such an Instrument.
18. Who hath set the Bounds to the Sea? who hath established the Earth? for there is some body, O Tat, that is the Maker and Lord of these things.
19. For it is impossible, O Son, that either place, or number, or measure, should be observed without a Maker.
20. For no order can be made by disorder or disproportion.

21. I would it were possible for thee, O my Son, to have wings, and to fly into the Air, and being taken up in the midst, between Heaven and Earth, to see the stability of the Earth, the fluidness of the Sea, the courses of the Rivers, the largeness of the Air, the sharpness or swiftness of the Fire, the motion of the Stars; and the speediness of the Heaven, by which it goeth round about all these.

22. O Son, what a happy sight it were, at one instant, to see all these, that which is unmovable moved, and that which is hidden appear and be manifest.

23. And if thou wilt see and behold this Workman, even by mortal things that are upon Earth, and in the deep. Consider, O Son, how Man is made and framed in the Womb; and examine diligently the skill and cunning of the Workman, and learn who it was that wrought and fashioned the beautiful and Divine shape of Man; who circumscribed and marked out his eyes? who bored his nostrils and ears? who opened his mouth? who stretched out and tied together his sinews! who channelled the veins? who hardened and made strong the bones! who clothed the flesh with skin? who divided the fingers and the joints! who flatted and made broad the soles of the feet! who digged the pores! who stretched out the spleen, who made the heart like a Pyramid? who made the Liver broad! who made the Lights spongy, and full of holes! who made the belly large and capacious? who set to outward view the more honourable parts and hid the filthy ones.

24. See how many Arts in one Matter, and how many Works in one Superscription, and all exceedingly beautiful, and all done in measure, and yet all differing.

25. Who hath made all these things! what Mother! what Father! save only God that is not manifest! that made all things by his own Will.

26. And no man says that a statue or an image is made without a Carver or a Painter, and was this Workmanship made without a Workman? O great Blindness, O great Impiety, O great Ignorance.

27. Never, O Son, canst thou deprive the Workmanship of the Workman, rather it is the best Name of all the Names of God, to call him the Father of all, for so he is alone; and this is his Work to be the Father.

28. And if thou wilt force me to say anything more boldly, it is his Essence to be pregnant, or great with all things, and to make them.

29. And as without a Maker, it is impossible that anything should be made, so it is that he should not always be, and always be making all things in Heaven, in the Air, in the Earth, in the Deep, in the whole World, and in every part of the whole that is, or that is not.

30. For there is nothing in the whole World, that is not himself both the things that are and the things that are not.

31. For the things that are, he hath made manifest; and the things that are not, he hath hid in himself.

32. This is God that is better than any name; this is he that is secret; this is he that is most manifest; this is he that is to be seen by the Mind; this is he that is visible to the eye; this is he that hath no body; and this is he that hath many bodies, rather there is nothing of any body, which is not He.

33. For he alone is all things.

34. And for this cause He hath all Names, because He is the One Father; and therefore He hath no Name, because He is the Father of all.

35. Who therefore can bless thee, or give thanks for thee, or to thee.
36. Which way shall I look, when I praise thee? upward? downward? outward? inward?
37. For about thee there is no manner, nor place, nor anything else of all things that are.
38. But all things are in thee; all things from thee, thou givest all things, and takest nothing; for thou hast all things and there is nothing that thou hast not.
39. When shall I praise thee, O Father; for it is neither possible to comprehend thy hour, nor thy time?
40. For what shall I praise thee? for what thou hast made, or for what thou hast not made! for those things thou hast manifested, or for those things thou hast hidden?
41. Wherefore shall I praise thee as being of myself, or having anything of mine own, or rather being another's?
42. For thou art what I am, thou art what I do, thou art what I say.
43. Thou Art All Things, and there is Nothing Else Thou art not.
44. Thou Art Thou, All that is Made, and all that is not Made.
45. The Mind that Understandeth.
46. The Father that Maketh and Frameth.
47. The Good that Worketh.
48. The Good that doth All Things.
49. Of the Matter, the most subtle and slender part is Air, of the Air the Soul, of the Soul the Mind, of the Mind God.

The Sixth Book. Called "That in God alone is Good."

- 1. Good, O Asclepius, is in nothing but in God alone; or rather God himself is the Good always.**
2. And if it be so, then must he be an Essence or Substance void of all motion and generation; but nothing is void or empty of him.
3. And this Essence hath about or in himself a Stable, and firm Operation, wanting nothing, most full, and giving abundantly.
4. One thing is the Beginning of all things, for it giveth all things; and when I name the Good, I mean that which is altogether and always Good.
5. This is present to none, but God alone; for he wanteth nothing, that he should desire to have it, nor can anything be taken from him; the loss whereof may grieve him; for sorrow is a part of evilness.

6. Nothing is stronger than he, that he should be opposed by it; nor nothing equal to him, that he should be in love with it; nothing unheard of to be angry, with nothing wiser to be envious at.
7. And none of these being in his Essence, what remains, but only the Good?
8. For as in this, being such an Essence, there is none of the evils; so in none of the other things shall the Good be found.
9. For in all other things, are all those other things. as well in the small as the great ; and as well in the particulars as in this living Creature the greater and mightiest of all.
10. For all things that are made or generated are full of Passion, Generation itself being a Passion ; and where Passion is there is not the Good; where the Good is, there is no Passion; where it is day, it is not night, and where it is night, it is not day.
11. Wherefore it is impossible, that in Generation should be the Good, but only in that which is not generated or made.
12. Yet as the Participation of all things is in the Matter bound, so also of that which is Good. After this manner is the World good, as it maketh all things, and in the part of making or doing it is Good, but in all other things not good.
13. For it is passible, and movable, and the Maker of passible things.
14. In Man also the Good is ordered (or Taketh Denomination) in comparison of that which is evil; for that which is not very evil, is here good; and that which is here called Good, is the least particle, or proportion of evil.
15. It is impossible therefore, that the Good should be here pure from Evil; for here the Good groweth Evil, and growing Evil, it doth not still abide Good; and not abiding Good it becomes Evil.
16. Therefore in God alone is the Good, or rather God is the Good.
17. Therefore, O Asclepius, there is nothing in men (or among Men) but the name of Good, the thing itself is not, for it is impossible; for a material Body receiveth (or Comprehendeth), is not as being on every side encompassed and coercted with evilness, and labours, and griefs, and desires, and wrath, and deceits, and foolish opinions.
18. And in that which is the worst of all, Asclepius, every one of the forenamed things, is here believed to be the greatest good, especially that supreme mischief the pleasures of the Belly, and the ring-leader of all evils; Error is here the absence of the Good.
19. And I give thanks unto God, that concerning the knowledge of Good, put this assurance in my mind, that it is impossible it should be in the World.
20. For the World is the fulness of evilness ; but God is the fulness of Good, or Good of God.
21. For the eminencies of all appearing Beauty, are in the Essence more pure, more sincere, and peradventure they are also the Essence of it.

22. For we must be bold to say, Asclepius, that the Essence of God, if he have an Essence, is that which is fair or beautiful; but no good is comprehended in this World.
23. For all things that are subject to the eye, are Idols, and as it were shadows; but those things that are not subject to the eye, are ever, especially the Essence of the Fair and the Good.
24. And as the eye cannot see God, so neither the Fair, and the Good.
25. For these are the parts of God that partake the Nature of the whole, proper, and familiar unto him alone, inseparable, most lovely, whereof either God is enamoured, or they are enamoured of God.
26. If thou canst understand God, thou shalt understand the Fair, and the Good which is most shining, and enlightening, and most enlightened by God.
27. For that Beauty is above comparison, and that Good is inimitable, as God himself.
28. As therefore thou understandest God, so understand the Fair and the Good, for these are incommunicable to any other living Creatures because they are inseparable from God.
29. If thou seek concerning God, thou seekest or askest also of the Fair, for there is one way that leads to the same thing, that is Piety with Knowledge.
30. Wherefore, they that are ignorant, and go not in the way of Piety, dare call Man Fair and Good, never seeing so much as in a dream, what Good is; but being enfolded and wrapped upon all evil, and believing that the evil is the Good, they by that means, both use it unsatiably, and are afraid to be deprived of it; and therefore they strive by all possible means, that they may not only have it, but also increase it.
31. Such, O Asclepius, are the Good and Fair things of men, which we can neither love nor hate, for this is the hardest thing of all, that we have need of them, and cannot live without them.

The Seventh Book. His Secret Sermon in the Mount Of Regeneration, and the Profession of Silence. To His Son Tat.

I. Tat. In the general Speeches, O Father, discoursing of the Divinity, thou speakest enigmatically, and didst not clearly reveal thyself, saying, That no man can be saved before Regeneration.

2. And when I did humbly entreat thee, at the going up the Mountain after thou hadst discoursed unto me, having a great desire, to learn this Argument of Regeneration; because among all the rest, I am ignorant only of this thou toldst me thou wouldst impart it unto me, when I would estrange myself from the World: whereupon I made myself ready, and have vindicated the understanding that is in me, from the deceit of the World.

3. Now then fulfill my defects, and as thou saidst instruct me of Regeneration, either by word of mouth or secretly; for I know not, O Trismegistus, of what Substance, or what Womb or what Seed a Man is thus born.

4. Hermes. O Son, this Wisdom is to be understood in silence, and the Seed is the true Good.

5. Tat. Who soweth it, O Father. for I am utterly ignorant and doubtful.

6. Hermes. The Will of God, O Son.

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7. And what manner of Man is he that is thus born? for in this point, I am clean deprived of the Essence that understandeth in me.

8. Hermes. The Son of God will be another, God made the universe, that in everything consisteth of all powers.

9. Tat. Thou tellest me a Riddle, Father, and dost not speak as a Father to his Son.

10. Hermes. Son, things of this kind are not taught, but are by God, when he pleaseth, brought to remembrance.

11. Tat. Thou speakest of things strained, or far fetched, and impossible, Father; and therefore I will directly contradict them.

12. Hermes. Wilt thou prove a stranger, Son, to thy Father's kind.

13. Do not envy me, Father, or pardon me, I am thy Natural Son; discourse unto me the manner of Regeneration.

14. Hermes. What shall I say, O my Son? I have nothing to say more than this, that I see in myself an unfeigned sight or spectacle, made by the mercy of God, and I am gone out of myself into an immortal body, and am now what I was before, but was begotten in Mind.

15. This thing is not taught, nor is it to be seen in this formed Element; for which the first compound form was neglected by me; and that I am now separated from it; for I have both the touch and the measure of it, yet am I now estranged from them.

16. Thou seest, O Son, with thine eyes; but though thou look never so steadfastly upon me, with the Body, and bodily sight, thou canst not see, nor understand what I am now.

17. Tat. Thou hast driven me, O Father, into no small fury and distraction of mind, for I do not now see myself.

18. Hermes. I would, O Son, that thou also wert gone out of thyself, like them that dream in their sleep.

19. Tat. Then tell me this, who is the Author and Maker of Regeneration?

20. Hermes. The child of God, one Man by the Will of God.

21. Tat. Now, O Father, thou hast put me to silence for ever and all my former thoughts have quite left and forsaken me, for I see the greatness, and shape of all things here below, and nothing but falsehood in them all.

22. And since this mortal Form is daily changed, and turned by this time into increase, and diminution, as being falsehood; what therefore is true, O Trismegistus?

23. Trismegistus. That, O Son, which is not troubled, nor bounded; not coloured, not figured, not changed; that which is naked, bright, comprehensible only of itself, unalterable, unbodily.

24. Tat. Now I am mad, indeed, Father; for when I thought me to have been made a wise man by thee, with these thoughts thou hast quite dulled all my senses.

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25. Hermes. Yet is it so, as I say, O Son, He that Looketh Only upon that which is carried upward as Fire, that which is carried downward as Earth, that which is moist as Water, and that which bloweth or is subject to blast as Air; how can he sensibly understand that which is neither hard, nor moist, nor tangible, nor perspicuous, seeing it is only understood in power and operation; but I beseech and pray to the Mind which alone can understand the Generation, which is in God.

26. Tat. Then am I, O Father, utterly unable to do it.

27. Hermes. God forbid, Son, rather draw or pull him unto thee (or Study to Know Him) and he will come, be but Willing, and it shall be done; quiet (or make idle) the Senses of the Body, purging thyself from unreasonable brutish torments of matter.

28. Tat. Have I any revengers or tormentors in myself, Father ?

29. Hermes. Yes, and those, not a few, but many and fearful ones.

30. Tat. I do not know them, Father.

31. Hermes. One Torment, Son, is Ignorance, a second, Sorrow, a third, Intemperance, a fourth Concupiscence, a fifth, Injustice, a sixth, Covetousness, a seventh, Deceit, an eighth, Envy, a ninth, Fraud or Guile, a tenth, Wrath, an eleventh, Rashness, a twelfth, Maliciousness.

32. They are in number twelve, and under these many more; some which through the prison of the body, do force the inwardly placed Man to suffer sensibly

33. And they do not suddenly, or easily depart from him, that hath obtained mercy of God; and herein consists, both the manner and the reason of Regeneration.

34. For the rest, O Son, hold thy peace, and praise God in silence, and by that means, the mercy of God will not cease, or be wanting unto us.

35. Therefore rejoice, my Son, from henceforward, being purged by the powers of God, to the Knowledge of the Truth.

36. For the revelation of God is come to us, and when that came all Ignorance was cast out.

37. The knowledge of Joy is come unto us, and when that comes, Sorrow shall fly away to them that are capable of it.

38. I call unto Joy, the power of Temperance, a power whose Virtue is most sweet; Let us take her unto ourselves, O Son, most willingly, for how at her coming hath she put away Intemperance.

39. Now I call the fourth, Continence, the power which is over Concupiscence. This, O Son, is the stable and firm foundation of Justice.

40. For see, how without labour, she hath chased away injustice and we are justified, O Son, when Injustice is away.

41. The sixth Virtue which comes into us, I call Communion, which is against Covetousness.

42. And when that (Covetousness) is gone, I call Truth ; and when she cometh, Error and Deceit vanisheth.

The Seventh Book. His Secret Sermon in the Mount Of Regeneration, and the Profession of Silence. To His

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43. See, O Son, how the Good is fulfilled by the access of Truth; for by this means, Envy is gone from us; for Truth is accompanied with the Good, together also with Life and Light.

44. And there came no more any torment of Darkness, but being overcome, they are all fled away suddenly, and tumultuously.

45. Thou hast understood, O Son, the manner of Regeneration; for upon the coming of these Ten, the Intellectual Generation is perfected, and then it driveth away the twelve; and we have seen it in the Generation itself.

46. Whosoever therefore hath of Mercy obtained this Generation which is according to God, he leaving all bodily sense, knoweth himself to consist of divine things, and rejoiceth, being made by God stable and immutable.

47. Tat. O Father, I conceive and understand, not by the sight of mine eyes, but by the Intellectual Operation, which is by the Powers. I am in Heaven, in the Earth, in the Water, in the Air, I am in living Creatures, in the Plants, in the Womb, everywhere.

48. Yet tell me further, this one thing, How are the torments of Darkness, being in number Twelve, driven away and expelled by the Ten powers. What is the manner of it, Trismegistus?

49. Hermes. This Tabernacle, O Son, consists of the Zodiacal Circle; and this consisting of twelve numbers, the Idea of one; but all formed Nature admit of divers Conjugations to the deceiving of Man.

50. And though they be different in themselves, yet are they united in practice (as for example, Rashness is inseparable from Anger) and they are also indeterminate: Therefore with good Reason, do they make their departure, being driven away by the Ten powers; that is to say, By the dead.

51. For the number of Ten, O Son, is the Begetter of Souls. And there Life and Light are united, where the number of Unity is born of the Spirit.

52. Therefore according to Reason, Unity hath the number of Ten, and the number of Ten hath Unity.

53. Tat. O Father, I now see the Universe, and myself in the Mind.

54. Hermes. This is Regeneration, O Son, that we should not any longer fix our imagination upon this Body, subject to the three dimensions, according to this Speech which we have now commented. That we may not at all calumniate the Universe.

55. Tat. Tell me, O Father, This Body that consists of Powers shall it ever admit of any Dissolution?

56. Hermes. Good words, Son, and speak not things impossible; for so thou shalt sin, and the eye of thy mind grow wicked.

57. The sensible Body of Nature is far from the Essential Generation; for that is subject to Dissolution, but this not; and that is mortal, but this immortal. Dost thou not know that thou art born a God and the Son of the One, as I am.

58. Tat. How fain would I, O Father, hear that praise given by a Hymn, which thou saidst, thou heardst from the Powers when I was in the Octonary.

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59. Hermes. As Pimander said by way of Oracle to the Octonary, Thou dost well, O Son, to desire the Solution of the Tabernacle, for thou art purified.

60. Pimander, the Mind of absolute Power and Authority, hath delivered no more unto me, than those that are written; knowing that of myself, I can understand all things, and hear, and see what I will. And he commanded me to do those things that are good; and therefore all the Powers that are in me sing.

61. Tat. I would hear thee, O Father, and understand these things.

62. Hermes. Be quiet, O Son, and now hearken to that harmonious blessing and thanksgiving: the hymn of Regeneration, which I did not determine to have spoken of so plainly, but to thyself in the end of all.

63. Wherefore this is not taught, but hid in silence.

64. So then, O Son, do thou standing in the open Air, worship looking to the North Wind, about the going down of the Sun, and to the South, when the Sun ariseth; And now keep silence, Son.

The Secret Song.

The Holy Speech.

65. Let all the Nature of the world entertain the hearing of this Hymn.

66. Be opened, O Earth, and let all the Treasure of the Rain be opened.

67. You Trees tremble not, for I will sing and praise the Lord of the Creation, and the All and the One.

68. Be opened you Heavens, ye Winds stand still, and let the Immortal Circle of God receive these words.

69. For I will sing, and praise him that created all things, that fixed the Earth, and hung up the Heavens, and commanded the sweet Water to come out of the Ocean; into all the World inhabited, and not inhabited, to the use and nourishment of all things, or men.

70. That commanded the fire to shine for very action, both to Gods and Men.

71. Let us altogether give him blessing, which rideth upon the Heavens, the Creator of all Nature.

72. This is he that is the Eye of the Mind, and Will accept the praise of my Powers.

73. O all ye Powers that are in me, praise the One and the All.

74. Sing together with my Will, all you Powers that are in me.

75. O Holy Knowledge, being enlightened by thee, I magnify the intelligible Light, and rejoice in the Joy of the Mind.

76. All my Powers sing praise with me, and thou my Continenence, sing praise my Righteousness by me; praise that which is righteous.

77. O Communion which is in me, praise the All.

78. By me the Truth sings praise to the Truth, the Good praiseth the Good.

79. O Life, O Light from us, unto you comes this praise and thanksgiving.

80. I give thanks unto thee, O Father, the operation or act of my Powers.

81. I give thanks unto thee, O God, the power of my operations.

82. By me thy Word sings praise unto thee, receive by me this reasonable (or verbal) sacrifice in words.

83. The powers that are in me cry these things, they praise the All, they fulfil thy Will; thy Will and Counsel is from thee unto thee.

84. O All, receive a reasonable Sacrifice from all things.

85. O Life, save all that is in us: O Light enlighten, O God the Spirit; for the Mind guideth or feedeth the Word; O Spirit bearing Workman.

86. Thou art God, thy Man crieth these things unto thee through by the Fire, by the Air, by the Earth, by the Water, by the Spirit, by thy Creatures.

87. From eternity I have found (means to) bless and praise thee, and I have what I seek, for I rest in thy Will.

88. Tat. O Father, I see thou hast sung this Song of praise and blessing with thy whole Will; and therefore have I put and placed it in my World.

89. Hermes. Say in thy intelligible World, O Son.

90. Tat. I do mean in my Intelligible World, for by thy Hymn and Song of Praise my mind is enlightened: and gladly would I send from my Understanding a Thanksgiving unto God.

91. Hermes. Not rashly, O Son.

92. Tat. In my mind, O Father.

93. Hermes. Those things that I see and contemplate, I infuse into thee; and therefore say, thou son Tat, the Author of thy succeeding Generations, I send unto God these reasonable Sacrifices.

94. O God, Thou art the Father, Thou art the Lord, Thou art the Mind, accept these reasonable Sacrifices which Thou requirest of Me.

95. For all things are done as the Mind willeth.

96. Thou, O Son, send this acceptable Sacrifice to God, the Father of all things; but propound it also, O Son, by Word.

97. Tat. I thank thee, Father, thou hast advised and instructed me thus to give praise and thanks.

98. Hermes. I am glad, O Son, to see the Truth bring forth the Fruits of Good things, and such immortal branches.

99. And learn this of me: Above all other virtues entertain Silence, and impart unto no man, O Son, the tradition of Regeneration, lest we be reputed Calumniators; For we both have now sufficiently meditated, I in speaking, thou in hearing. And now thou dost intellectually know thyself and our Father.

The Eighth Book. That The Greatest Evil In Man, Is The Not Knowing God.

1. Whither are you carried, O Men, drunken with drinking up the strong Wine of Ignorance? which seeing you cannot bear: Why do you not vomit it up again?

2. Stand, and be sober, and look up again with the eyes of your heart; and if you cannot all do so, yet do as many as you can.

3. For the malice of Ignorance surroundeth all the Earth, and corrupteth the Soul, shut up in the Body not suffering it to arrive at the Havens of Salvation.

4. Suffer not yourselves to be carried with the great stream, but stem the tide, you that can lay hold of the Haven of Safety, and make your full course towards it.

5. Seek one that may lead you by the hand, and conduct you to the door of Truth and Knowledge, where the clear Light is that is pure from Darkness, where there is not one drunken, but all are sober and in their heart look up to him, whose pleasure it is to be seen.

6. For he cannot be heard with ears, nor seen with eyes, nor expressed in words; but only in mind and heart.
7. But first thou must tear to pieces and break through the garment thou wearest ; the web of Ignorance, the foundation of all Mischief; the bond of Corruption ; the dark Coverture; the living Death ; the sensible Carcass, the Sepulchre, carried about with us; the domestical Thief which in what he loves us, hates us, envies us.
8. Such is the hurtful Apparel, wherewith thou art clothed, which draws and pulls thee downward by its own self; lest looking up, and seeing the beauty of Truth, and the Good that is reposed therein, thou shouldst hate the wickedness of this garment, and understand the traps and ambushes, which it hath laid for thee.
9. Therefore doth it labour to make good those things that seem and are by the Senses, judged and determined; and the things that are truly, it hides, and envelopeth in such matter, filling what it presents unto thee, with hateful pleasure, that thou canst neither hear what thou shouldst hear, nor see what thou shouldst see.

The Ninth Book. A Universal Sermon To Asclepius.

- 1. Hermes. All that is moved, O Asclepius, is it not moved in some thing, and by some thing?*
2. Asclepius. Yes, indeed.
3. Hermes. Must not that, in which a thing is moved, of necessity be greater than the thing that is moved?
4. Of necessity.
5. And that which moveth, is it not stronger than that which is moved?
6. Asclepius. It is stronger.
7. Hermes. That in which a thing is moved, must it not needs have a Nature, contrary to that of the thing that is moved?
8. Asclepius. It must needs.
9. Hermes. Is not this great World a Body, than. which there is no greater?
10. Asclepius. Yes, confessedly.
11. Hermes. And is it not solid, as filled with many great bodies, and indeed, with all the Bodies that are?
12. Asclepius. It is so.
13. Hermes. And is not the World a Body, and a Body that is moved.
14. Asclepius. It is.
15. Hermes. Then what kind of a place must it be, wherein it is moved, and of what Nature? Must it not be much bigger, that it may receive the continuity of Motion? and lest that which is moved should for want of room, be stayed, and hindered in the Motion?

16. Asclepius. It must needs be an immense thing, Trismegistus, but of what Nature.
17. Hermes. Of a contrary Nature, O Asclepius; but is not the Nature of things unbodily, contrary to a Body.
18. Asclepius. Confessedly.
19. Hermes. Therefore the place is unbodily; but that which is unbodily, is either some Divine thing or God himself And by some thing Divine, I do not mean that which was made or begotten.
20. If therefore it be Divine, it is an Essence or Substance but if it be God, it is above Essence; but he is otherwise intelligible.
21. For the first, God is intelligible, not to himself, but to us, for that which is intelligible, is subject to that which understandeth by Sense.
22. Therefore God is not intelligible to himself, for not being any other thing from that which is understood, he cannot be understood by himself.
23. But he is another thing from us, and therefore he is understood by us.
24. If therefore Place be intelligible, it is not Place but God, but if God be intelligible, he is intelligible not as Mace, but as a capable Operation.
25. Now everything that is moved, is moved, not in or by that which is moved, but in that which standeth or resteth, and that which moveth standeth or resteth, for it is impossible it should be moved with it.
26. Asclepius. How then, O Trismegistus, are those things that are here moved with the things that are moved? for thou sayest that the Spheres that wander are moved by the Sphere that wanders not.
27. Hermes. That, O Asclepius, is not a moving together, but a countermotion, for they are not moved after a like manner, but contrary one to the other; and contrariety hath a standing resistance of motion for resistance is a staying of motion.
28. Therefore the wandering Spheres being moved contrarily to that Sphere which wandereth not, shall have one from another contrariety standing of itself.
29. For this Bear which thou seest neither rise nor go down, but turning always about the same; dost thou think it moveth or standeth still?
30. Asclepius. I think it moves, Trismegistus.
31. What motion, O Asclepius?
32. Asclepius. A motion that is always carried about the same.
33. But the Circulation which is about the same, and the motion about the same, are both hidden by Station; for that which is about the same forbids that which is above the same, if it stand to that which is about the same.
34. And so the contrary motion stands fast always, being always established by the contrariety.

35. But I will give thee concerning this matter, an earthly example that may be seen with eyes.

36. Look upon any of these living Creatures upon Earth, as Man for example, and see him swimming; for as the Water is carried one way, the reluctance or resistance of his feet and hands is made a station to the man, that he should not be carried with the Water, nor sink underneath it.

37. Asclepius. Thou hast laid down a very clear example, Trismegistus.

38. Hermes. Therefore every motion is in station, and is moved of station.

39. The motion then of the World, and of every material living thing, happeneth not to be done by those things that are without the World, but by those things within it, a Soul, or Spirit, or some other unbodily thing, to those things which are without it.

40. For an inanimated Body, doth not now, much less a Body if it be wholly inanimate.

41. Asclepius. What meaneth thou by this, O Trismegistus, Wood and Stones, and all other inanimate things, are they not moving Bodies?

42. Hermes. By no means, O Asclepius, for that within the Body which moves the inanimate thing, is not the Body, that moves both as well the Body of that which beareth, as the Body of that which is born; for one dead or inanimate thing, cannot move another; that which moveth, must needs be alive if it move.

43. Thou seest therefore how the Soul is surcharged, when it carrieth two Bodies.

44. And now it is manifest, that the things that are moved are moved in something, and by something.

45 Asclepius. The things that are, O Trismegistus, must needs be moved in that which is void or empty, Vacuum.

46. Be advised, O Asclepius, for of all the things that are, there is nothing empty, only that which is not, is empty and a stranger to existence or being.

47. But that which is, could not be if it were not full of existence, for that which is in being or existence can never be made empty.

48. Asclepius. Are there not therefore some things that are empty, O Trismegistus, as an empty Barrel, an empty Hogshead, an empty Well, an empty Wine-Press, and many such like?

49. Hermes. O the grossness of thy Error, O Asclepius, those things that are most full and replenished, dost thou account them void and empty.

50. Asclepius. What may be thy meaning, Trismegistus?

51. Hermes. Is not the Air a Body?

52. Asclepius. It is a Body

53. Hermes. Why then this Body doth it not pass through all things that are and passing through them, fill them? and that Body doth it not consist of the mixture of the four? therefore all those thou callest empty are full of Air.

54. Therefore those things that thou callest empty, thou oughtest to call them hollow, not empty, for they exist and are full of Air and Spirit.
55. Asclepius. This reason is beyond all contradiction, O Trismegistus, but what shall we call the Place in which the whole Universe is moved?
56. Hermes. Call it incorporeal, O Asclepius.
57. Asclepius. What is that incorporeal or unbodily?
58. Hermes. The Mind and Reason, the whole, wholly comprehending itself, free from all Body, undeceivable, invisible, impassible from a Body itself, standing fast in itself, capable of all things, and that favour of the things that are.
59. Whereof the Good, the Truth, the Archetypal Light, the Archetype of the Soul, are as it were Beams.
60. Asclepius. Why then, what is God?
61. Hermes. That which is none of these things, yet is, and is the cause of Being to all; and every one of the things that are; for he left nothing destitute of Being.
62. And all things are made of things that are, and not of things that are not; for the things that are not, have not the nature to be able to be made; and again, the things that are, have not the nature never to be, or not to be at all.
63. Asclepius. What dost thou then say at length, that God is?
64. Hermes. God is not a Mind, but the Cause that the Mind is; not a Spirit, but the Cause that the Spirit is; not Light, but the Cause that Light is.
65. Therefore we must worship God by these two Appellations which are proper to him alone, and to no other.
66. For neither of all the other, which are called Gods, nor of Men, nor Demons, or Angels, can anyone be, though never so little, good, save only God alone.
67. And this He is, and nothing else; but all other things are separable from the nature of Good.
68. For the Body and the Soul have no place that is capable of or can contain the Good.
69. For the greatness of Good, is as great as the Existence of all things, that are both bodily and unbodily, both sensible and intelligible.
70. This is the Good, even God.
71. See therefore that thou do not at any time, call ought else Good, for so thou shalt be impious, or any else God, but only the Good, for so thou shalt again be impious.
72. In Word it is often said by all men the Good, but all men do not understand what it is; but through Ignorance they call both the Gods, and some men Good, that can never either be or be made so.

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73. Therefore all the other Gods are honoured with the title and appellation of God, but God is the Good, not according to Heaven, but Nature.

74. For there is one Nature of God, even the Good, and one kind of them both, from whence are all kinds.

75. For he that is Good, is the giver of all things, and takes nothing and therefore God gives all things and receives nothing.

76. The other title and appellation, is the Father, because of his making all things; for it is the part of a Father to make.

77. Therefore it hath been the greatest and most Religious care in this life, to them that are wise, and well-minded, to beget children.

78. As likewise it is the greatest misfortune and impiety for any to be separated from men, without children; and this man is punished after death by the Demons, and the punishment is this, To have the Soul of this childless man, adjudged and condemned to a Body, that neither hath the nature of a man, nor of a woman, which is an accursed thing under the Sun.

79. Therefore, O Asclepius, never congratulate any man that is childless; but on the contrary, pity his misfortune, knowing what punishment abides, and is prepared for him.

80. Let so many, and such manner of things, O Asclepius, be said as a certain precognition of all things in Nature.

The Tenth Book. The Mind to Hermes.

1. Forbear thy speech, O Hermes Trismegistus, and call to mind those things that are said: but I will not delay to speak what comes into my mind, since many men have spoken many things, and those very different, concerning the Universe and Good; but I have not learned the Truth.

2. Therefore, the Lord make it plain to me in this point ; for I will believe thee only, for the manifestation of these things.

3. Then said the Mind how the case stands.

4. God and all.

5. God, Eternity, the World, Time, Generation,

6. God made Eternity, Eternity the World; the World Time, and Time Generation.

7. Of God, as it were the Substance, is the Good, the Fair, Blessedness, Wisdom.

8. Of Eternity, Identity, or Selfness.

9. Of the World, Order.

10. Of Time, Change.

11. Of Generation, Life, and Death.

12. But the Operation of God, is Mind and Soul.
13. Of Eternity, Permanence, or Long-lasting, and Immortality
14. Of the World, Restitution, and Decay or Destruction.
15. Of Time, Augmentation and Diminution.
16. And of Generation, Qualities.
17. Therefore Eternity is in God.
18. The World in Eternity.
19. Time in the World.
20. And Generation in Time.
21. And Eternity standeth about God.
22. The World is moved in Eternity.
23. Time is determined in the World.
24. Generation is done in Time.
25. Therefore the Spring and Fountain of all things is God.
26. The Substance Eternity.
27. The Matter is the World.
28. The Power of God is Eternity.
29. And the Work of Eternity is the World not yet made, and yet ever made by Eternity.
30. Therefore shall nothing be at any time destroyed, for Eternity is incorruptible.
31. Neither can anything perish, or be destroyed in the World, the World being contained and embraced by eternity.
32. But what is the Wisdom of God? Even the Good, and the Fair and Blessedness, and every Virtue, and Eternity.
33. Eternity therefore put into the Matter Immortality and Everlastingness; for the Generation of that depends upon Eternity, even as Eternity doth of God.
34. For Generation and Time, in Heaven, and in Earth, are of a double Nature; in Heaven they are unchangeable and incorruptible, but on Earth they are changeable and corruptible.
35. And the Soul of Eternity is God; and the Soul of the World Eternity; and of the Earth, Heaven.

36. God is in the Mind, the Mind in the Soul¹ the Soul in the Matter, all things by Eternity.
37. All this Universal Body, in which are all Bodies, is full of Soul, the Soul full of Mind, the Mind full of God.
38. For within he fills them, and without he contains them, quickening the Universe.
39. Without he quickens this perfect living thing the World, and within all living Creatures.
40. And above in Heaven he abides in Identity or Selfness, but below upon Earth he changeth Generation.
41. Eternity comprehendeth the World, either by Necessity, or Providence, or Nature.
42. And if any man shall think any other thing, it is God that actuateth, or operateth this All.
43. But the operation or Act of God, is power insuperable, to which none may compare anything, either Human or Divine.
44. Therefore, O Hermes, think none of these things below, or the things above, in any wise like unto God, for if thou dost thou errest from the Truth.
45. For nothing can be like the unlike, and only and One; nor mayest thou think that he hath given of his Power to any other thing.
46. For who after him can make anything, either of Life, or Immortality; of Change or of Quality, and himself what other thing should he make.
47. For God is not idle, for then all things would be idle ; for all things are full of God.
48. But there is not anywhere in the world such a thing as Idleness; for Idleness is a name that implieth a thing void or empty, both of a Doer and a thing done.
49. But all things must necessarily be made or done both always and according to the nature of every place.
50. For he that maketh or doth is in all things, yet not fastened or comprehended in anything, nor making or doing one thing, but all things.
51. For being an active or operating Power and sufficient of himself for the things that are made, and the things that are made are under him.
52. Look upon, through me, the World is subject to thy sight, and understand exactly the Beauty thereof.
53. A Body immarcessible, than the which, there is nothing more ancient, yet always vigorous and young.
54. See also the seven Worlds set over us, adorned with an everlasting Order, and filling Eternity, with a different course.
55. For all things are full of Light, but the Fire is nowhere.
56. For the friendship and commixture of contraries and unlike became Light shining from the Act or Operation of God, the Father of all Good, the Prince of all Order, and the Ruler of the seven Worlds.

57. Look also upon the Moon, the forerunner of them all, the Instrument of Nature, and which changeth the Matter here below.
58. Behold the Earth, the middle of the whole, the firm and stable Foundation of the Fair World, the Feeder and Nurse of Earthly things.
59. Consider moreover, how great the multitude is of immortal living things, and of mortal ones also; and see the Moon going about in the midst of both, to wit, of things immortal and mortal.
60. But all things are full of Soul, and all things are properly moved by it; some things about the Heaven, and some things about the Earth, and neither of those on the right hand to the left; nor those on the left hand to the right; nor those things that are above, downward; nor those things that are below, upwards.
61. And that all these things are made, O beloved Hermes, thou needst not learn of me.
62. For they are Bodies, and have a Soul, and are moved.
63. And that all these should come together into one, it is impossible without some thing, to gather them together.
64. Therefore there must be some such ones, and he altogether One.
65. For seeing that the motions are divers, and many, and the Bodies not alike, and yet one ordered swiftness among them all; It is impossible there should be two or more Makers.
66. For one order is not kept by many.
67. But in the weaker, there would be jealousy of the stronger and thence also Contentions.
68. And if there were one Maker of mutable and mortal living wights, he would desire also to make immortal ones, as he that were the Maker of immortal ones, would do to make mortal.
69. Moreover also, if there were two, the Matter being one, who should be chief, or have the disposing of the facture?
70. Or if both of them, which of them the greater part?
71. But think thus that every living Body hath its consistence of Matter and Soul; and of that which is immortal, and that which is mortal, and unreasonable.
72. For all living Bodies have a Soul; and those things that are not living are only matter by itself.
73. And the Soul likewise of itself drawing near her Maker, is the Cause of Life and Being and Being the cause of Life, is after a manner, the cause of immortal things.
74. How then are mortal wights, other from immortal?
75. Or how cannot he make living wights that causeth immortal things and immortality ?
76. That there is some Body that doth these things it is apparent, and that he is also one, it is most manifest.

77. For there is one Soul, one Life and one Matter.
78. Who is this? Who can it be? Other than the One God.
79. For whom else can it benefit, to make living things, save only God alone?
80. There is therefore one God.
81. For it is a ridiculous thing to confess the World to be one Sun, one Moon, one Divinity; and yet to have I know not how many gods.
82. He therefore being One, doth all things in many things.
83. And what great thing is it for God to make Life and Soul, and Immortality, and Change, when thy self dost so many things?
84. For thou both seest, speakest and hearest, smellest, tastest and touchest, walkest, understandest, and breathest.
85. And it is not one that seeth, and another that heareth, and another that speaketh, and another that toucheth, and another that smelleth, and another that walketh, and another that understandeth, and another that breatheth, but One that doth all these things.
86. Yet neither can these things possibly be without God.
87. For as thou, if thou shouldst cease from doing these things, were not a living wight; so if God should cease from those, he were not (which is not lawful to say) any longer God.
88. For if it be already demonstrated, that nothing can be idle or empty, how much more may be affirmed of God?
89. For if there be any thing which he doth not do, then is he (if it were lawful to say so) imperfect.
90. Whereas feeling he is not idle, but perfect, certainly he doth all things.
91. Now give thy self unto me, O Hermes, for a little while thou shalt the more easily understand, that it is the necessary work of God that all things should be made or done that are done or were once done, or shall be done.
92. And this, O best Beloved, is life.
93. And this is the Fair.
94. And this is the Good.
95. And this is God.
96. And if thou wilt understand this by work also, mark what happens to thy self, when thou wilt generate.
97. And yet this is not like unto him; for he is not sensible of pleasure, for neither hath he any other Fellow-workman.

98. But being himself the only Workman he is always in the Work, himself being that which he doth or maketh.
99. For all things, if they were separated from him, must needs fall and die, as there being no life in them.
100. And again, if all things be living wights, both which are in Heaven, and upon Earth; and that there be one Life in all things which are made by God, and that is God, then certainly all things are made, or done by God.
101. Life is the union of the Mind and the Soul.
102. But death is not the destruction of those things that were gathered together, but a dissolving of the Union.
103. The Image therefore of God is Eternity, of Eternity the World, of the World the Sun, of the Sun, Man.
104. But the people say, That changing is Death, because the Body is dissolved, and the Life goeth into that which appeareth not.
105. By this discourse, my dearest Hermes, I affirm as thou hearest, That the World is changed, because every day part thereof becomes invisible ; but that it is never dissolved.
106. And these are the Passions of the World, Revolutions and Occultations, and Revolution is a turning, but Occultation is Renovation.
107. And the World being all formed, bath not the forms lying without it, but itself changeth in itself.
108. Seeing then the World is all formed, what must he be that made it? for without form he cannot be.
109. And if he be all formed, he will be kept like the World, but if he have but one form, he shall be in this regard less than the World.
110. What do we then say that he is? we will not raise any doubts by our speech; for nothing that is doubtful concerning God, is yet known.
111. He hath therefore one Idea which is proper to him, which because it is unbodily is not subject to the sight, and yet shews all forms by the Bodies.
112. And do not wonder, if there be an incorruptible Idea.
113. For they are like the Margents of that Speech which is in writing; for they seem to be high and swelling, hut they are by nature smooth and even.
114. But understand well this that I say, more boldly, for it is more true; As a man cannot live without life, so neither can God live, not doing good.
115. For this is, as it were, the Life and Motion of God, to move all things, and quicken them.
116. But some of the things I have said, must have a particular explication; Understand then what I say.
117. All things are in God, not as lying in a place; for Place is both a Body, and unmoveable, and those things that are there placed, have no motion.

118. For they lie otherwise in that which is unbodily, than in the fantasy or to appearance.
119. Consider him that contains all things, and understand, that nothing is more capacious, than that which is incorporeal, nothing more swift, nothing more powerful, but it is most capacious, most swift and most strong.
120. And judge of this by thyself, command thy Soul to go into India, and sooner than thou canst bid it, it will be there.
121. Bid it likewise pass over the Ocean, and suddenly it will be there; Not as passing from place to place, but suddenly it will be there.
122. Command it to fly into Heaven, and it will need no Wings, neither shall anything hinder it; not the fire of the Sun, not the Aether, not the turning of the Spheres, not the bodies of any of the other Stars, but cutting through all, it will fly up to the last, and furthest Body.
123. And if thou wilt even break the whole, and see those things that are without the World (if there be any thing without) thou mayest.
124. Behold how great power, how great swiftness thou hast! Canst thou do all these things, and cannot God?
125. After this manner therefore contemplate God to have all the whole World to himself, as it were all thoughts, or intellections.
126. If therefore thou wilt not equal thy self to God, thou canst not understand God.
127. For the like is intelligible by the like.
128. Increase thy self into an immeasurable greatness, leaping beyond every Body; and transcending all Time, become Eternity and thou shalt understand God: If thou believe in thyself that nothing is impossible, but accountest thy self immortal, and that thou canst understand all things, every Art, every Science and the manner and custom of every living thing.
129. Become higher than all height, lower than all depths, comprehend in thy self, the qualities of all the Creatures, of the Fire, the Water, the Dry and Moist; and conceive likewise, that thou canst at once be everywhere in the Sea, in the Earth.
130. Thou shalt at once understand thy self, not yet begotten in the Womb, young, old, to be dead, the things after death, and all these together as also times, places, deeds, qualities, quantities, or else thou canst not yet understand God.
131. But if thou shut up thy Soul in the Body and abuse it, and say, I understand nothing, I can do nothing, I am afraid of the Sea, I cannot climb up into Heaven, I know not who I am, I cannot tell what I shall be; what hast thou to do with God; for thou canst understand none of those Fair and Good things; be a lover of the Body, and Evil.
132. For it is the greatest evil, not to know God.
133. But to be able to know and to will, and to hope, is the straight way, and Divine way, proper to the Good; and it will everywhere meet thee, and everywhere be seen of thee, plain and easy, when thou dost not expect or look for it; it will meet thee, waking, sleeping, sailing, travelling, by night, by day, when thou speakest, and when thou keepest silence.

134. For there is nothing which is not the Image of God.
135. And yet thou sayest, God is invisible, but be advised, for who is more manifest than He.
136. For therefore hath he made all things, that thou by all things mayest see him.
137. This is the Good of God, this is his Virtue, to appear, and to be seen in all things.
138. There is nothing invisible, no, not of those things that are incorporeal.
139. The Mind is seen in Understanding, and God is seen in doing or making.
140. Let these things thus far forth, be made manifest unto thee, O Trismegistus.
141. Understand in like manner, all other things by thy self, and thou shalt not be deceived.

The Eleventh Book. Of the Common Mind to Tat.

1. The Mind, O Tat, is of the very Essence of God, if yet there be any Essence of God.

2. What kind of Essence that is, he alone knows himself exactly.
3. The Mind therefore is not cut off, or divided from the essentiality of God, but united as the light of the sun.
4. And this mind in men, is God, and therefore are some men Divine, and their Humanity is near Divinity.
5. For the good Demon called the Gods immortal men, and men mortal Gods.
6. But in the brute Beasts, or unreasonable living wights, the Mind is their Nature.
7. For where there is a Soul, there is the Mind, as where there is Life, there is also a Soul.
8. In living Creatures therefore, that are without Reason, the Soul is Life, void of the operations of the Mind.
9. For the Mind is the Benefactor of the Souls of men, and worketh to the proper Good.
10. And in unreasonable things it co-operateth with the Nature of everyone of them, but in men it worketh against their Natures.
11. For the Soul being in the Body, is straightway made Evil by Sorrow, and Grief and Pleasure or Delight.
12. For Grief and Pleasure flow like Juices from the compound Body, whereinto, when the Soul entereth, or descendeth, she is moistened and tinted with them.
13. As many Souls therefore, as the Mind governeth or overruleth, to them it shows its own Light, resisting their prepossessions or presumptions.
14. As a good Physician grieveth the Body, prepossessed of a disease, by burning or lancing it for health's sake.

15. After the same manner also, the Mind grieveth the Soul, by drawing it out of Pleasure, from whence every disease of the Soul proceedeth.
16. But the great Disease of the Soul is Atheism because that opinion followeth to all Evil and no Good.
17. Therefore the Mind resisting it procureth Good to the Soul, as a Physician health to the Body.
18. But as many Souls of Men, as do not admit or entertain the Mind for their Governor, do suffer the same thing that the Soul of unreasonable living things.
19. For the Soul being a Co-operator with them, permits or leaves them to their concupiscences, whereunto they are carried by the torrent of their Appetite, and so tend to brutishness.
20. And as Brute Beasts, they are angry without reason, and they desire without reason, and never cease, nor are satisfied with evil.
21. For unreasonable Angers and Desires, are the most exceeding Evils.
22. And therefore hath God set the Mind over these, as a Revenger and Reprover of them.
23. Tat. Here, O Father, that discourse of Fate or Destiny which thou madest to me, is in danger to be overthrown; For if it be fatal for any man to commit Adultery or Sacrilege or do any evil, he is punished also, though he of necessity do the work of Fate or Destiny.
24. Hermes. All things, O Son, are the work of Fate, and without it, can no bodily thing, either Good or Evil, be done.
25. For it is decreed by Fate, that he that cloth any evil, should also suffer for it.
26. And therefore he cloth it, that he may suffer that which he suffereth, because he did it.
27. But for the present let alone that speech, concerning Evil and Fate, for at other times we have spoken of it.
28. Now our discourse is about the Mind, and what it can do, and how it differs, and is in men such a one, but in brute Beasts changed
29. And again, in Brute Beasts it is not beneficial, but in men by quenching both their Anger and Concupiscences.
30. And of men thou must understand some to be rational or governed by reason, and some irrational.
31. But all men are subject to Fate, and to Generation, and Changes, for these are the beginning and end of Fate or Destiny.
32. And all men suffer those things that are decreed by Fate.
33. But rational men, over whom as we said, the Mind bears rule, do not suffer like unto other men, but being free from viciousness, and being not evil, they do suffer evil.
34. Tat. How sayest thou this again, Father? An Adulterer, is he not evil? a Murderer, is he not evil? and so all others.

35. Hermes. But the rational man, O Son, will not suffer for Adultery, but as the Adulterer, nor for Murder, but as the Murderer.

36. And it is impossible to escape the Quality of Change, as of Generation, but the Viciousness, he that hath the Mind, may escape.

37. And therefore, O Son, I have always heard the good Demon say, and if he had delivered it in writing, he had much profited all mankind: For he alone, O Son. as the first born, God, seeing all things, truly spake Divine words. I have heard him say sometimes, That all Things are one thing, Especially Intelligible Bodies, or that all Especially Intelligible Bodies are one.

38. We live in Power, in Act and in Eternity.

39. Therefore a good Mind, is that which the Soul of him is.

40. And if this be so, then no intelligible thing differs from intelligible things.

41. As therefore it is possible, that the Mind, the Prince of all things; so likewise, that the Soul that is of God, can do whatsoever it will.

42. But understand thou well, for this Discourse I have made to the question which thou askest of me before, I mean concerning Fate and the Mind.

43. First, if, O Son, thou shalt diligently withdraw thy self from all Contentious speeches, thou shalt find that in Truth, the Mind, the Soul of God bears rule over all things, both over Fate and Law and all other things.

44. And nothing is impossible to him, no not of the things that are of Fate.

45. Therefore, though the Soul of man be above it, let it not neglect the things that happen to be under Fate.

46. And these thus far, were the excellent sayings of the good Demon.

47. Tat. Most divinely spoken, O Father, and truly and profitably, yet clear this one thing unto me

48. Thou sayest, that in brute Beasts the Mind worketh or acteth after the manner of Nature, co-operating also with their (impetus) inclinations.

49. Now the impetuous inclinations of brute Beasts, as I conceive, are Passions. If therefore the Mind do co-operate with these impetuous Inclinations, and that they are the Passions in brute Beasts, certainly the Mind is also a Passion, conforming itself to Passions.

50. Hermes. Well done, Son, thou askest nobly, and yet it is just that I should answer thee.

51. All incorporeal things, O Son, that are in the Body, are possible, nay, they are properly Passions.

52. Everything that moveth is incorporeal; everything that is moved is a Body, and it is moved into the Bodies by the Mind. Now motion is Passion, and there they both suffer; as well that which moveth, as that which is moved, as well that which ruleth, as that which is ruled.

53. But being freed from the Body, it is freed likewise from Passion.

54. But especially, O Son, there is nothing impassible, but all things are passible.
55. But Passion differs from that which is passible, for that (Passion) acteth but this suffers.
56. Bodies also of themselves do act, for either they are unmovable, or else are moved, and which soever it be, it is a Passion.
57. But incorporeal things do always act, or work, and therefore they are passible.
58. Let not therefore the appellations or names trouble thee, for Action and Passion are the same thing, but that it is not grievous to use the more honourable name.
59. Tat. O Father. thou has delivered this Discourse most plainly.
60. Hermes. Consider this also, O Son, That God hath freely bestowed upon man, above all other living things, these two, to wit, Mind and Speech, or Reason, equal to immortality.
61. These if any man use, or employ upon what he ought, he shall differ nothing from the Immortals.
62. Yea, rather going out of the Body, he shall be guided and led by them, both into the Choir and Society of the Gods, and blessed Ones.
63. Tat. Do not other living Creatures use Speech, O Father?
64. Hermes. NO, Son, but only Voice; now Speech and Voice do differ exceeding much; for Speech is common to all men, but Voice is proper unto every kind of living thing.
65. Tat. Yea, but the Speech of men is different. O Father, every man according to his Nation.
66. Hermes. It is true, O Son, they do differ: Yet as man is one so is Speech one also; and it is interpreted and found the same, both in Egypt, Persia, and Greece.
67. But thou seemest unto me, Son, to be ignorant of the Virtue or Power, and Greatness of Speech.
68. For the blessed God, the good Demon said or commanded the Soul to be in the Body, the Mind, in the Soul, the Word, or Speech, or Reason in the Mind, and the Mind in God, and that God is the Father of them all.
69. Therefore the Word is the Image of the Mind, and the Mind of God, and the Body of the Idea, and the Idea of the Soul.
70. Therefore of the Matter, the subtlest or smallest part is Air, of the Air the Soul, of the Soul the Mind, of the Mind God.
71. And God is about all things, and through all things, but the Mind about the Soul, the Soul about the Air, and the Air about the Matter.
72. But Necessity, and Providence, and Nature, are the Organs or Instruments of the World, and of the Order of Matter.
73. For of those things that are intelligible, every one is but the Essence of them in Identity.

74. But of the Bodies of the whole, or universe, every one is many things.

75. For the Bodies that are put together, and that have, and make their changes into other, having this Identity, do always save and preserve the uncorruption of the Identity.

76. But in every one of the compound Bodies, there is a number.

77. For without number it is impossible there should be consistence or constitution, or composition, or dissolution.

78. But Unities do both beget and increase Numbers, and again being dissolved, come into themselves.

79. And the Matter is One.

80. But this whole World, the great God, and the Image of the Greater, and united unto him, and conserving the Order and Will of the Father, is the fulness of Life.

81. And there is nothing therein, through all the Eternity of the Revolutions, neither of the whole, nor of the parts which cloth not live.

82. For there is nothing dead, that either hath been, or is, or shall be in the World.

83. For the Father would have it as long as it lasts, to be a living thing; and therefore it must needs be God also.

84. How therefore, O Son, can there be in God, in the Image of the Universe, in the fulness of Life, any dead things?

85. For dying is corruption, and corruption is destruction.

86. How then can any part of the incorruptible be corrupted, or of God be destroyed?

87. Tat. Therefore, O Father, do not the living things in the World die, though they be parts thereof.

88. Hermes. Be wary in thy Speech, O Son, and not deceived in the names of things.

89. For they do not die, O Son, but as compound Bodies they are dissolved.

90. But dissolution is not death; and they are dissolved, not that they may be destroyed, but that they may be made new.

91. Tat. What then is the operation of Life? Is it not Motion?

92. Hermes. And what is there in the World unmovable? Nothing at all, O Son.

93. Tat. Why, cloth not the Earth seem unmovable to thee, O Father?

94. Hermes. No, but subject to many motions, though after a manner it alone be stable.

95. What a ridiculous thing it were, that the Nurse of all things should be unmovable, which beareth and bringeth forth all things.

96. For it is impossible, that anything that bringeth forth, should bring forth without Motion.
97. .And a ridiculous question it is, Whether the fourth part of the whole, be idle: For the word immovable, or without Motion, signifies nothing else, but idleness.
98. Know generally, O Son, That whatsoever is in the World is moved either according to Augmentation or Diminution.
99. But that which is moved, liveth also, yet it is not necessary, that a living thing should be or continue the same.
100. For while the whole World is together, it is unchangeable, O Son, but all the parts thereof are changeable.
101. Yet nothing is corrupted or destroyed, and quite abolished but the names trouble men.
102. For Generation is not Life, but Sense; neither is Change Death, but Forgetfulness, or rather Occultation, and lying hid. Or better thus. For Generation is not a Creation of Life, but a Production of Things to Sense, and making them Manifest. Neither is Change Death, but an Occultation or Hiding of that which was.
103. These things being so, all things are Immortal, Matter, Life, Spirit, Soul, Mind, whereof every living thing consisteth.
104. Every living thing therefore is Immortal, because of the Mind, but especially Man, who both receiveth God, and converseth with him.
105. For with this living wight alone is God familiar; in the night by dreams, in the day by Symbols or; Signs.
106. And by all things cloth he foretell him of things to come, by Birds, by Fowls, by the Spirit, or Wind, and by an Oak.
107. Wherefore also Man professeth to know things that: have been, things that are present, and things to come.
108. Consider this also, O Son, That every living Creature goeth upon one part of the World, Swimming things in Water, Land wights upon the Earth, Flying Fowls in the Air.
109. But Man useth all these, the Earth, the Water, the Air, and the Fire, nay, he seeth and toucheth Heaven by his Sense.
110. But God is both about all things, and through all things, for he is both Act and Power.
111. And it is no hard thing, O Son, to understand God.
112. And if thou wilt also see him, look upon the Necessity of things that appear, and the Providence of things that have been, and are done.
113. See the Matter being most full of Life, and so great a God moved with all Good, and Fair, both Gods, and Demons, and Men.
114. Tat. But these, O Father, are wholly Acts or Operations.

115. Hermes. If they be therefore wholly Acts or Operations, O Son, by whom are they acted or operated, but by God?

116. Or art thou ignorant, that as the parts of the World, are Heaven, and Earth, and Water, and Air; after the same manner the Members of God, are Life, and Immortality, and Eternity, and Spirit, and Necessity, and Providence, and Nature, and Soul, and Mind, and the Continuance or Perseverance of all these which is called Good.

117. And there is not any thing of all that hath been, and all that is, where God is not.

118. Tat. What in the Matter, O Father?

119. Hermes. The Matter, Son, what is it without God, that thou shouldst ascribe a proper place to it?

120. Or what cost thou think it to be? peradventure some heap that is not actuated or operated.

121. But if it be actuated, by whom is it actuated? for we have said, that Acts or Operations, are the parts of God.

122. By whom are all living things quickened? and the Immortal, by whom are they immortalized? the things that are changeable, by whom are they changed?

123. Whether thou speak of Matter, or Body, or Essence, know that all these are acts of God.

124. And that the Act of Matter is materiality, and of the Bodies corporality, and of Essence essentiality; and this is God the whole.

125. And in the whole, there is nothing that is not God.

126. Wherefore about God, there is neither Greatness, Place, Quality, Figure, or Time; for he is All, and the All, through all, and about all.

127. This Word, O Son, worship and adore. And the only service of God, is not to be evil.

The Twelfth Book. His Crater or Monas.

1. The Workman made this Universal World, not with his Hands, but his Word.

2. Therefore thus think of him, as present everywhere, and being always, and making all things, and one above, that by his Will hath framed the things that are.

3. For that is his Body, not tangible, nor visible, nor measurable, nor extensible, nor like any other body.

4. For it is neither Fire, nor Water, nor Air, nor Wind, but all these things are of him, for being Good, he hath dedicated that name unto himself alone.

5. But he would also adorn the Earth, but with the Ornament of a Divine Body.

6. And he sent Man an Immortal and a Mortal wight.

7. And Man had more than all living Creatures, and the World, because of his Speech, and Mind.

8. For Man became the spectator of the Works of God, and wondered, and acknowledged the Maker.
9. For he divided Speech among all men, but not Mind, and yet he envied not any, for Envy comes not thither, but is of abode here below in the Souls of men, that have not the Mind.
10. Tat. But wherefore, Father, did not God distribute the Mind to all men?
11. Because it pleased him, O Son, to set that in the middle among all souls as a reward to strive for.
12. Tat. And where hath he set it?
13. Hermes. Filling a large Cup or Bowl therewith, he sent it down, giving also a Cryer or Proclaimer.
14. And he commanded him to proclaim these things to the souls of men.
15. Dip and wash thyself, thou that art able, in this Cup or Bowl; Thou that believes", that thou shalt return to him that sent this Cup; thou that acknowledgest whereunto thou wert made.
16. As many therefore as understood the Proclamation, and were baptised or dowsed into the Mind, these were made partakers of Knowledge, and became perfect men, receiving the Mind.
17. But as many as missed of the Proclamation, they received Speech, but not Mind, being ignorant whereunto they were made, or by whom.
18. But their senses are just like to brute Beasts, and having their temper in Anger and Wrath, they do not admire the things worthy of looking on.
19. But wholly addicted to the pleasures and desires of the Bodies, they believe that man was made for them.
20. But as many as partook of the gift of God, these, O Tat, in comparison of their works, are rather immortal than mortal men.
21. Comprehending all things in their Mind, which are upon the Earth, which are in Heaven, and if there be anything above Heaven.
22. And lifting up themselves so high, they see the Good, and seeing it, they account it a miserable calamity to make their abode here.
23. And despising all things bodily and unbodily, they make haste to the One and Only.
24. Thus, O Tat, is the Knowledge of the Mind, the beholding of Divine Things, and the Understanding of God, the Cup itself being Divine.
25. Tat. And I, O Father, would be baptised and drenched therein.
26. Hermes. Except thou first hate thy body, O Son, thou canst not love thy self; but loving thy self, thou shalt have the Mind, and having the Mind, thou shalt also partake the Knowledge or Science.
27. Tat. HOW meanest thou that, O Father?
28. Hermes. Because it is impossible, O Son, to be conversant about things Mortal and Divine.

29. For the things that are, being two Bodies, and things incorporeal, wherein is the Mortal and the Divine, the Election or Choice of either is left to him that will choose; For no man can choose both.
30. And of which soever the choice is made, the other being diminished or overcome, magnifieth the act and operation of the other.
31. The choice of the hefter therefore is not only best for him that chooseth it, by deifying a man; but it also sheweth Piety and Religion towards God.
32. But the choice of the worse destroys a man, but cloth nothing against God; save that as Poms or Pageants, when they come abroad, cannot do any thing themselves, but hinder; after the same manner also do these make Poms or Pageants in the World, being seduced by the pleasures of the Body.
33. These things being so, O Tat, that things have been, and are so plenteously ministered to us from God; let them proceed also from us, without any scarcity or sparing.
34. For God is innocent or guiltless, but we are the causes of Evil, preferring them before the Good.
35. Thou seest, O Son, how many Bodies we must go beyond, and how many choirs of Demons, and what continuity and courses of Stars, that we may make haste to the One, and only God.
36. For the Good is not to be transcended, it is unbounded and infinite; unto itself without beginning, but unto us, seeming to have a beginning, even our knowledge of it.
37. For our knowledge is not the beginning of it, but shews us the beginning of its being known unto us.
38. Let us therefore lay hold of the beginning and we shall quickly go through all things.
39. It is indeed a difficult thing, to leave those things that are accustomable, and present, and turn us to those things that are ancient, and according to the original.
40. For these things that appear, delight us, but make the things that appear not, hard to believe, or the Things that Appear not, are Hard to believe.
41. The things most apparent are Evil, but the Good is secret, or hid in, or to the things that appear for it hath neither Form nor Figure.
42. For this cause it is like to itself, but unlike every thing else; for it is impossible, that any thing incorporeal, should be made known, or appear to a Body.
43. For this is the difference between the like and the unlike, and the unlike wanteth always somewhat of the like.
44. For the Unity, Beginning, and Root of all things, as being the Root and Beginning.
45. Nothing is without a beginning, but the Beginning is of nothing, but of itself; for it is the Beginning of all other things.
46. Therefore it is, seeing it is not from another beginning.

47. Unity therefore being the Beginning, containeth every number, but itself is contained of none, and begetteth every number, itself being begotten of no other number.
48. Every thing that is begotten (or made) is imperfect, and may be divided, increased, diminished.
49. But to the perfect, there happeneth none of these.
50. And that which is increased, is increased by Unity, but is consumed and vanished through weakness, being not able to receive the Unity.
51. This Image of God, have I described to thee, O Tat, as well as I could; which if thou do diligently consider, and view by the eyes of thy mind, and heart, believe me, Son, thou shalt find the way to the things above, or rather the Image itself will lead thee.
52. But the spectacle or sight, hath this peculiar and proper; Them that can see, and behold it, it holds fast and draws unto it, as they say, the Loadstone cloth Iron.

The Thirteenth Book. Of Sense and Understanding.

1. Yesterday, Asclepius, I delivered a perfect Discourse; but now I think it necessary, in suite of that, to dispute also of Sense.

2. For Sense and Understanding seem to differ, because the one is material, the other essential.
3. But unto me, they appear to be both one, or united, and not divided in men, I mean.
4. For in other living Creatures, Sense is united unto Nature but in men to Understanding.
5. But the Mind differs from Understanding, as much as God from Divinity.
6. For Divinity is from or under God, and Understanding from the Mind, being the sister of the Word or Speech, and they the Instruments one of another.
7. For—neither is the Word pronounced without Understanding, neither is Understanding manifested without the Word.
8. Therefore Sense and Understanding do both flow together into a man, as if they were infolded one within another.
9. For neither is it possible without Sense to Understand, nor can we have Sense without Understanding.
10. And yet it is possible (for the Time being) that the Understanding may understand without Sense, as they that fantasy Visions in their Dreams.
11. But it seems unto me, that both the operations are in the Visions of Dreams, and that the Sense is stirred up out of sleep, unto awaking.
12. For man is divided into a Body and a Soul; when both parts of the Sense accord one with another, then is the understanding childed, or brought forth by the Mind pronounced.

13. For the Mind brings forth all Intellections or Understandings. Good ones when it receiveth good Seed from God; and the contrary when it receives them from Devils.
14. For there is no part of the World void of the Devil, which entering in privately, sowed the seed of his own proper operation; and the Mind did make pregnant, or did bring forth that which was sown, Adulteries, Murders, Striking of Parents, Sacrileges, Impieties, Stranglings, throwing down headlong, and all other things which are the works of evil Demons.
15. And the Seeds of God are few but Great, and Fair, and Good Virtue, and Temperance, and Piety.
16. And the Piety is the Knowledge of God, whom whosoever knoweth being full of all good things, hath Divine Understanding and not like the Many.
17. And therefore they that have that Knowledge neither please the multitude, nor the multitude them, but they seem to be mad, and to move laughter, hated and despised, and many times also murdered.
18. For we have already said, That wickedness must dwell here, being in her own region.
19. For her region is the Earth, and not the World, as some will sometimes say, Blaspheming.
20. But the Godly or God-worshipping Man laying hold on Knowledge, will despise or tread under all these things; for though they be evil to other men, yet to him all things are good.
21. And upon mature consideration, he refers all things to Knowledge, and that which is most to be wondered at, he alone makes evil things good.
22. But I return again to my Discourse of Sense.
23. It is therefore a thing proper to Man, to communicate and conjoin Sense and Understanding.
24. But every man, as I said before, doth not enjoy Understanding; for one man is material, another essential.
25. And he that is material with wickedness as I said, received from the Devils the Seed of Understanding; but they that are with the Good essentially, are saved with God.
26. For God is the Workman of all things; and when he worketh he useth Nature.
27. He maketh all things good like himself.
28. But these things that are made good, are in the use of Operation, unlawful.
29. For the Motion of the World stirring up Generations, makes Qualities, infecting some with evilness, and purifying some with good.
30. And the World, Asclepius, hath a peculiar Sense and Understanding, not like to Man's, nor so various or manifold, but a better and more simple.
31. For this Sense and Understanding of the World is One, in that it makes all things, and unmakes them again into itself; for it is the Organ or Instrument of the Will of God.

32. And it is so organized or framed, and made for an Instrument by God; that receiving all Seeds into itself from God, and keeping them in itself, it maketh all things effectually and dissolving them, reneweth all things.
33. And therefore like a good Husband—man of Life, when things are dissolved or loosened, he affords by the casting of Seed, renovation to all things that grow.
34. There is nothing that it (the World) cloth not beget or bring forth alive; and by its Motion, it makes all things alive.
35. And it is at once, both the Place and the Workman of Life.
36. But the Bodies are from the Matter, in a different manner; for some are of the Earth, some of Water, some of Air, some of Fire, and all are compounded, but some are more compounded, and some are more simple.
37. They that are compounded, are the heavier, and they that are less, are the higher.
38. And the swiftness of the Motion of the World, makes the varieties of the Qualities of Generation, for the spiration or influence, being most frequent, extendeth unto the Bodies qualities with one fulness, which is of Life.
39. Therefore, God is the Father of the World, but the World is the Father of things in the World.
40. And the World is the Son of God, but things in the World are the Sons of the World.
41. And therefore it is well called the World, that is an Ornament, because it adorneth and beautifieth all things with the variety of Generation, and indeficiency of Life, which the unweariedness of Operation, and the swiftness of Necessity with the mingling of Elements, and the order of things done.
42. Therefore it is necessarily and properly called the World.
43. For of all living things, both the Sense and the Understanding, cometh into them from without, inspired by that which compasseth them about, and continueth them.
44. And the World receiving it once from God as soon as it was made, hath it still, What Ever it Once Had.
45. But God is not as it seems to some who Blaspheme through superstition, without Sense, and without Mind, or Understanding.
46. For all things that are, O Asclepius, are in God, and made by him, and depend of him, some working by Bodies, some moving by a Soul—like Essence, some quickening by a Spirit, and some receiving the things that are weary, and all very fitly.
47. Or rather, I say, that he hath them not, but I declare the Truth, He is All Things, not receiving them from without, but exhibiting them outwardly.
48. And this is the Sense and Understanding of God, to move all things always.
49. And there never shall be any time, when any of those things that are, shall fail or be wanting.
50. When I say the things that are, I mean God, for the things that are, God hash; and neither is there anything without him, nor he without anything.

51. These things, O Asclepius, will appear to be true, if thou understand them, but if thou understand them not, incredible.
52. For to understand, is to believe, but not to believe, is not to understand; For my speech or words reach not unto the Truth, but the Mind is great, and being led or conducted for a while by Speech, is able to attain to the Truth.
53. And understanding all things round about, and finding them consonant, and agreeable to those things that were delivered and interpreted by Speech, believeth; and in that good belief, resteth.
54. To them, therefore, that understand the things that have been said of God, they are credible, but to them that understand them not, incredible.
55. And let these and thus many things be spoken concerning Understanding and Sense.

The Fourteenth Book. Of Operation and Sense.

- 1. Tat. Thou hast well explained these things, Father: Teach me furthermore these things; for thou sayest, that Science and Art were the Operations of the rational, but now thou sayest that Beasts are unreasonable, and for want of reason, both are and are called Brutes; so that by this Reason, it must needs follow that unreasonable Creatures partake not of Science, or Art, because they come short of Reason.**
2. Hermes. It must needs be so, Son.
3. Tat. Why then, O Father, do we see some unreasonable living Creatures use both Science and Art? as the Pismires treasure up for themselves food against the Winter, and Fowls of the Air likewise make them Nests, and four-footed Beasts know their own Dens.
4. These things they do, O Son, not by Science or Art, but by Nature; for Science or Art are things that are taught, but none of these brute Beasts are taught any of these things.
5. But these things being Natural unto them, are wrought by Nature, whereas Art and Science do not happen unto all, but unto some.
6. As men are Musicians, but not all; neither are all Archers or Huntsmen, or the rest, but some of them have learned something by the working of Science or Art.
7. After the same manner also, if some Pismires did so, and some not, thou mightest well say, they gather their food according to Science and Art.
8. But seeing they are all led by Nature, to the same thing, even against their wills, it is manifest they do not do it by Science or Art.
9. For Operations, O Tat, being unbodily, are in Bodies, and work by Bodies.
10. Wherefore, O Tat, in as much as they are unbodily, thou must needs say they are immortal.
11. But in as much as they cannot act without Bodies, I say, they are always in a Body.
12. For those things that are to any thing, or for the cause of any thing made subject to Providence or Necessity, cannot possibly remain idle of their own proper Operation.

13. For that which is, shall ever be; for both the Body, and the Life of it, is the same.
14. And by this reason, it follows, that the Bodies also are always, because I affirm: That this corporiety is always by the Act and Operation, or for them.
15. For although earthly bodies be subject to dissolution; yet these bodies must be the Places, and the Organs, and Instruments of Acts or Operations.
16. But Acts or Operations are immortal, and that which is immortal, is always in Act, and therefore also Corporification if it be always.
17. Acts or Operations do follow the Soul, yet come not suddenly or promiscuously, but some of them come together with being made man, being about brutish or unreasonable things.
18. But the purer Operations do insensibly in the change of time, work with the oblique part of the Soul.
19. And these Operations depend upon Bodies, and truly they that are Corporifying come from the Divine Bodies into Mortal ones.
20. But every one of them acteth both about the Body and the Soul, and are present with the Soul, even without the Body.
21. And they are always Acts or Operations, but the Soul is not always in a Mortal Body, for it can be without a Body, but Acts or Operations cannot be without Bodies.
22. This is a sacred speech, Son, the Body cannot Consist without a Soul.
23. Tat. How meanest thou that, Father?
24. Hermes. Understand it thus, O Tat, When the Soul is separated from the Body, there remaineth that same Body.
25. And this same Body according to the time of its abode, is actuated or operated in that it is dissolved and becomes invisible.
26. And these things the Body cannot suffer without act or operation, and consequently there remaineth with the Body the same act or operation.
27. This then is the difference between an Immortal Body, and a Mortal one, that the immortal one consists of one Matter, and so doth not the mortal one; and the immortal one doth, but this suffereth.
28. And everything that acteth or operateth is stronger, and ruleth; but that which is actuated or operated, is ruled.
29. And that which ruleth, directeth and governeth as free, but the other is ruled, a servant.
30. Acts or Operations do not only actuate or operate living or breathing or insouled Bodies, but also breathless Bodies, or without Souls, Wood, and Stones, and such like, increasing and hearing fruit, ripening, corrupting, rotting, putrifying and breaking, or working such like things, and whatsoever inanimate Bodies can suffer.

31. Act or Operation, O Son, is called, whatsoever is, or is made or done, and there are always many things made, or rather all things.
32. For the World is never widowed or forsaken of any of those things that are, but being always carried or moved in itself, it is in labour to bring forth the things that are, which shall never be left by it to corruption.
33. Let therefore every act or operation be understood to be always immortal, in what manner of Body soever it be.
34. But some Acts or Operations be of Divine, some of corruptible Bodies, some universal, some peculiar, and some of the generals, and some of the parts of every thing.
35. Divine Acts or Operations therefore there be, and such as work or operate upon their proper Bodies, and these also are perfect, and being upon or in perfect Bodies.
36. Particular are they which work by any of the living Creatures.
37. Proper, be they that work upon any of the things that are.
38. By this Discourse, therefore, O Son, it is gathered that all things are full of Acts or Operations.
39. For if necessarily they be in every Body, and that there be many Bodies in the World, I may very well affirm, that there be many other Acts or Operations.
40. For many times in one Body, there is one, and a second, and a third, besides these universal ones that follow.
41. And universal Operations, I call them that are indeed bodily, and are done by the Senses and Motions.
42. For without these it is impossible that the Body should consist.
43. But other Operations are proper to the Souls of Men, by Arts, Sciences, Studies, and Actions.
44. The Senses also follow these Operations, or rather are the effects or perfections of them.
45. Understand therefore, O Son, the difference of Operations, it is sent from above.
46. But sense being in the Body, and having its essence from it, when it receiveth Act or Operation, manifesteth it, making it as it were corporeal.
47. Therefore, I say, that the Senses are both corporeal and mortal, having so much existence as the Body, for they are born with the Body, and die with it.
48. But mortal things themselves have not Sense, as Not consisting of such an Essence.
49. For Sense can be no other than a corporeal apprehension, either of evil or good that comes to the Body.
50. But to Eternal Bodies there is nothing comes, nothing departs; therefore there is no sense in them.
51. Tat. Doth the Sense therefore perceive or apprehend in every Body.

52. Hermes. In every Body, O Son.

53. Tat. And do the Acts or Operations work in all things?

54. Hermes. Even in things inanimate, O Son, but there are differences of Senses.

55. For the Senses of things rational, are with Reason; of things unreasonable, Corporeal only, but the Senses of things inanimate are passive only, according to Augmentation and Diminution.

56. But Passion and Sense depend both upon one head, or height, and are gathered together into the same, by Acts or Operations.

57. But in living wights there be two other Operations that follow the Senses and Passions, to wit, Grief and Pleasure.

58. And without these, it is impossible that a living wight, especially a reasonable one, should perceive or apprehend.

59. And therefore, I say, that these are the Ideas of Passions that bear rule, especially in reasonable living wights.

60. The Operations work indeed, but the Senses do declare and manifest the Operations, and they being bodily, are moved by the brutish parts of the Soul therefore I say, they are both maleficial or doers of evil.

61. For that which affords the Sense to rejoice with Pleasure is straightway the cause of many evils happening to him that suffers it.

62. But Sorrows gives stronger torments and Anguish, therefore doubtless are they both maleficial.

63. The same may be said of the Sense of the Soul.

64. Tat. Is not the Soul incorporeal, and the Sense a Body, Father? or is it rather in the Body.

65. Hermes. If we put it in a Body, O Son, we shall make it like the Soul or the Operations, for these being unbodily, we say are in Bodies.

66. But Sense is neither Operation, nor Soul, nor anything else that belongs to the Body, but as we have said, and therefore it is not incorporeal.

67. And if it be not incorporeal it must needs be a Body; for we always say, that of things that are, some are Bodies and some incorporeal.

The Fifteenth Book. Of Truth to His Son Tat.

1. Hermes. Of Truth, O Tat, it is not possible that man being an imperfect wight, compounded of imperfect Members, and having his Tabernacle consisting of different and many Bodies, should speak with any confidence.

2. But as far as it is possible, and just, I say, That Truth is only in the Eternal Bodies, whose very Bodies be also true.

3. The Fire is fire itself only, and nothing else; the Earth is earth itself and nothing else; the air is air itself and nothing else; the water, water itself and nothing else.
4. But our Bodies consist of all these; for they have of the Fire, they have of the Earth, they have of the Water, and Air, and yet there is neither Fire, nor Earth, nor Water, nor Air, nor anything true.
5. And if at the Beginning our Constitution had not Truth, how could men either see the Truth, or speak it, or understand it only, except God would?
6. All things therefore upon Earth, O Tat, are not Truth, but imitations of the Truth, and yet not all things neither, for they are but few that are so.
7. But the other things are Falsehood, and Deceit, O Tat, and Opinions like the Images of the fantasy or appearance.
8. And when the fantasy hath an influence from above, then it is an imitation of Truth, but without that operation from above, it is left a lie.
9. And as an Image shews the Body described, and yet is not the Body of that which is seen, as it seems to be, and it is seen to have eyes, but it sees nothing, and ears, but hears nothing at all; and all other things hath the picture, but they are false, deceiving the eyes of the beholder, whilst they think they see the Truth, and yet they are indeed but lies.
10. As many therefore as see not Falsehood, see the Truth.
11. If therefore we do so understand, and see every one of these things as it is, then we see and understand true things.
12. But if we see or understand any thing besides or otherwise than that which is, we shall neither understand, nor know the Truth.
13. Tat. Is Truth therefore upon Earth, O Father?
14. Hermes. Thou cost not miss the mark, O Son. Truth indeed is nowhere at all upon Earth, O Tat, for it cannot be generated or made.
15. But concerning the Truth, it may be that some men, to whom God will give the good seeing Power, may understand it.
16. So that unto the Mind and reason, there is nothing true indeed upon Earth.
17. But unto the True Mind and Reason, all things are fantasies or appearances, and opinions.
18. Tat. Must we not therefore call it Truth, to understand and speak the things that are?
19. Hermes. But there is nothing true upon Earth.
20. Tat. How then is this true, That we do not know anything true? how can that be done here?
21. Hermes. O Son, Truth is the most perfect Virtue, and the highest Good itself, not troubled by Matter, not encompassed by a Body, naked, clear, unchangeable, venerable, unalterable Good.

- 22 But the things that are here, O Son, are visible, incapable of Good, corruptible, passible, dissolvable, changeable, continually altered, and made of another.
23. The things therefore that are not true to themselves, how can they be true?
24. For every thing that is altered, is a lie, not abiding in what it is; but being changed it shews us always, other and other appearances.
25. Tat. Is not man true, O Father?
26. Hermes. AS far forth as he is a Man, he is not true, Son; for that which is true, hath of itself alone its constitution and remains, and abides according to itself, such as it is.
27. But man consists of many things and doth not abide of himself but is turned and changed, age after age, Idea after Idea, or form after form, and this while he is yet in the Tabernacle.
28. And many have not known their own children after a little while, and many children likewise have not known their own Parents.
29. Is it then possible, O Tat, that he who is so changed, is not to be known, should be true? No, on the contrary, he is Falsehood, being in many Appearances of changes.
30. But do thou understand the true to be that which abides the same, and is Eternal, but man is not ever, therefore not True, but man is a certain Appearance, and Appearance is the highest Lie or Falsehood.
31. Tat. But these Eternal Bodies, Father, are they not true though they be changed?
32. Hermes. Everything that is begotten or made, and changed is not true, but being made by our Progenitor, they might have had true Matter.
33. But these also have in themselves, something that is false in regard of their change.
34. For nothing that remains not in itself, is True.
35. Tat. What shall one say then, Father, that only the Sun which besides the Nature of other things, is not changed, but abides in itself, is Truth?
36. Hermes. It is Truth, and therefore is he only intrusted with the Workmanship of the World, ruling and making all things whom I do both honour, and adore his Truth; and after the One, and First, I acknowledge him the Workman.
37. Tat. What therefore doth thou affirm to be the first Truth, O Father?
38. Hermes. The One and Only, O Tat, that is not of Matter, that is not in a body, that is without Colour, without Figure or Shape, Immutable, Unalterable, which always is; but Falsehood, O Son, is corrupted.
39. And corruption hath laid hold upon all things on Earth, and the Providence of the True encompasseth, and will encompass them.
40. For without corruption, there can no Generation consist.

41. For Corruption followeth every Generation, that it may again be generated.
42. For those things that are generated, must of necessity be generated of those things that are corrupted, and the things generated must needs be corrupted, that the Generation of things being, may not stand still or cease.
43. Acknowledge therefore the first Workman by the Generation of things.
44. Consequently the things that are generated of Corruption are false, as being sometimes one thing, sometimes another: For it is impossible they should be made the same things again, and that which is not the same, how is it true?
45. Therefore, O Son, we must call these things fantasies or appearances.
46. And if we will give a man his right name, we must call him the appearance of Manhood; and a Child, the fantasy or appearance of a Child; an old man, the appearance of an old man; a young man, the appearance of a young man; and a man of ripe age, the appearance of a man of ripe age.
47. For neither is a man, a man; nor a child, a child; nor a young man, a young man; nor an old man, an old man.
- 48 But the things that pre-exist and that are, being changed are false.
49. These things understand thus, O Son, as these false Operations, having their dependence from above, even of the truth itself.
50. Which being so, I do affirm that Falsehood is the Work of Truth.

The Sixteenth Book. That None of the Things that are, can Perish.

1. Hermes. We must now speak of the Soul and Body, O Son; after what manner the Soul is Immortal, and what operation that is, which constitutes the Body, and dissolves it.

2. But in none of these is Death, for it is a conception of a name, which is either an empty word, or else it is wrongly called Death (by the taking away the first letter,) instead of Immortal. [Thanatos for Athanatos.]
3. For Death is destruction, but there is nothing in the whole world that is destroyed.
4. For if the World be a second God, and an Immortal living Wight, it is impossible that any part of an Immortal living Wight should die.
5. But all things that are in the World, are members of the World, especially Man, the reasonable living Wight.
6. For the first of all is God, the Eternal and Unmade, and the Workman of all things.
7. The second is the World, made by him, after his own Image and by him holden together, and nourished, and immortalized; and as from its own Father, ever living.
8. So that as Immortal, it is ever living, and ever immortal.
9. For that which is ever living, differs from that which is eternal.

10. For the Eternal was not begotten, or made by another; and if it were begotten or made, yet it was made by itself, not by any other, but it is always made.
11. For the Eternal, as it is Eternal, is the Universe.
12. For the Father himself, is Eternal of himself, but the World was made by the Father, ever living and immortal.
13. And as much Matter as there was laid up by him, the Father made it all into a Body, and swelling it, made it round like a Sphere, endued it with Quality, being itself immortal, and having Eternal Materiality.
14. The Father being full of Ideas, sowed Qualities in the Sphere, and shut them up, as in a Circle, deliberating to beautify with every Quality, that which should afterwards be made.
15. Then clothing the Universal Body with Immortality, lest the Matter, if it would depart from this Composition, should be dissolved into its own disorder.
16. For when the Matter was incorporeal, O Son, it was disordered, and it hath here the same confusion daily revolved about other little things, endued with Qualities, in point of Augmentation, and Diminution, which men call Death, being indeed a disorder happening about earthly living wights.
17. For the Bodies of Heavenly things have one order, which they have received from the Father at the Beginning, and is by the instauration of each of them, kept indissolveable.
18. But the instauration of earthly Bodies, is their consistence; and their dissolution restores them into indissoluble, that is, Immortal.
19. And so there is made a privation of Sense, but not a destruction of Bodies.
20. Now the third living wight is Man, made after the Image of the World; and having by the Will of the Father, a Mind above other earthly wights.
21. And he hath not only a sympathy with the second God, but also an understanding of the first.
22. For the second God, he apprehends as a Body but the first, he understands as Incorporeal, and the Mind of the Good.
23. Tat. And doth not this living Wight perish?
24. Hermes. Speak advisedly, O Son, and learn what God is, what the World, what an Immortal Wight, and what a dissolvable One is.
25. And understand that the World is of God and in God; but Man of the World and in the World.
26. The Beginning, and End, and Consistence of all, is God.

The Seventeenth Book. To Asclepius, to be Truly Wise.

1. Because my Son Tat, in thy absence, would needs learn the Nature of the things that are: He would not suffer me to give over (as coming very young to the knowledge of every individual) till I was forced to discourse to him many things at large, that his contemplation might from point to point, be more easy and successful.

2. But to thee I have thought good to write in few words, choosing out the principal heads of the things then spoken, and to interpret them more mystically, because thou hast, both more years, and more knowledge of Nature.

3. All things that appear, were made, and are made.

4. Those things that are made, are not made by themselves, but by another.

5. And there are many things made, but especially all things that appear, and which are different, and not like.

6. If the things that be made and done, be made and done by another, there must be one that must make, and do them; and he unmade, and more ancient than the things that are made.

7. For I affirm the things that are made, to be made by another; and it is impossible, that of the things that are made any should be more ancient than all, but only that which is not made.

8. He is stronger, and One, and only knowing all things indeed, as not having any thing more ancient than himself.

9. For he bears rule, both over multitude, and greatness, and the diversity of the things that are made, and the continuity of the Factice and of the Operation.

10. Moreover, the things that are made, are visible, but he is invisible; and for this cause, he maketh them, that he may be visible; and therefore he makes them always.

11. Thus it is fit to understand and understanding to admire and admiring to think thy self happy, that knowest thy natural Father.

12. For what is sweeter than a Natural Father?

13. Who therefore is this, or how shall we know him?

14. Or is it just to ascribe unto him alone, the Title and Appellation of God, or of the Maker, or of the Father, or of all Three? That of God because of his Power; the Maker because of his Working and Operation; and the Father, because of his Goodness.

15. For Power is different from the things that are made, but Act or Operation, in that all things are made.

16. Wherefore, letting go all much and vain talking, we must understand these two things, That Which is Made, and Him Which is the Maker; for there is nothing in the middle, between these Two, nor is there any third.

17. Therefore understanding All things, remember these Two; and think that these are All things, putting nothing into doubt; neither of the things above, nor of the things below; neither of things changeable, nor things that are in darkness or secret.

18. For All things, are but two Things, That which Maketh, and that which is Made, and the One of them

cannot depart, or be divided from the Other.

19. For neither is it possible that the maker should be without the thing made, for either of them is the self-same thing; therefore cannot the One of them be separated from the other, no more than a thing can be separated from itself.

20. For if he that makes be nothing else, but that which makes alone, Simple, Uncompounded, it is of necessity, that he makes the same thing to himself, to whom it is the Generation of him that maketh to be also All that is made.

21. For that which is generated or made, must necessarily be generated or made by another, but without the Maker that which is made, neither is made, nor is; for the one of them without the other, hath lost his proper Nature by the privation of the other.

22. So if these Two be confessed, That which maketh, and that which is made, then they are One in Union, this going before, and that following.

23. And that which goeth before, is, God the Maker, and that which follows is, that which is made, be it what it will.

24. And let no man be afraid because of the variety of things that are made or done, lest he should cast an aspersion of baseness, or infamy upon God, for it is the only Glory of him to do, or make All things.

25. And this making, or facture is as it were the Body of God, and to him that maketh or doth, there is nothing evil, or filthy to be imputed, or There is Nothing thought Evil or Filthy.

26. For these are Passions that follow Generation as Rust doth Copper, or as Excrements do the Body.

27. But neither did the Copper-smith make the Rust, nor the Maker the Filth, nor God the Evilness.

28. But the vicissitude of Generation doth make them, as it were to blossom out; and for this cause did make Change to be, as one should say, The Purgation of Generation.

29. Moreover, is it lawful for the same Painter to make both Heaven, and the Gods, and the Earth, and the Sea, and Men, and brute Beasts, and inanimate Things, and Trees; and is it impossible for God to make these things? O the great madness, and ignorance of men in things that concern God!

30. For men that think so, suffer that which is most ridiculous of all; for professing to bless and praise God yet in not ascribing to him the making or doing of All things, they know him not.

31. And besides their not knowing him, they are extremely impious against him, attributing unto him Passions, as Pride, or Oversight, or Weakness, or Ignorance, or Envy.

32. For if he do not make or do all things, he is either proud or not able, or ignorant, or envious, which is impious to affirm.

33. For God hath only one Passion, namely Good and he that is good is neither proud, nor impotent, nor the rest, but God is Good itself.

34. For Good is all power, to do or make all things, and every thing that is made, is made by God, that is by the Good and that can make or do all things.

35. See then how he maketh all things, and how the things are done, that are done, and if thou wilt learn, thou mayest see an Image thereof, very beautiful, and like.
36. Look upon the Husbandman, how he casteth Seeds into the Earth, here Wheat, there Barley, and elsewhere some other Seeds.
37. Look upon the same Man, planting a Vine, or an Apple-Tree, or a Fig-Tree, or some other Tree.
38. So doth God in Heaven sow Immortality, in the Earth Change in the whole Life, and Motion.
39. And these things are not many, but few, and easily numbered for they are all but four, God and Generation, in which are all things.